

Report to	<b>Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment</b>
Date	<b>10 October 2005</b>
Report By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Title of Report	<b>Vehicle Activated Signs – Proposed Revised Policy PS 4/29</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To consider a revised policy for the provision of vehicle activated signs</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**To note the outcome of the review undertaken and approve revised policy PS4/29 - Provision of Vehicle Activated Signs.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Funding of vehicle activated sign installations is met from the Integrated Transport measures element of the Capital Programme, subject to availability of resources.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 In March 2005 the Project Board for the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Review of Setting Local Speed Limits in East Sussex presented its findings to the Scrutiny Committee. The report was presented to Cabinet in April along with my response to its recommendations, both of which were approved by Cabinet and subsequently by County Council.

2.2 This report relates to recommendation (R4) from the Project Board report and my subsequent response which can be detailed as follows:

- Recommendation R4: *"The criteria for introducing vehicle activated signs (VAS) which support compliance with speed limits should be the same as for traffic 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."*
- My Response: *"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 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."*

2.3 A revised version of PS4/29 is urgently required to ensure that the assessment and implementation of further VAS sites during the current financial year is not delayed. However, in respect of the speed limit policy I am still waiting for revised guidance from the Department of Transport. Once this documentation is available, its impact on our current speed policy will be reviewed and reported at the earliest opportunity.

### **3. Comments / Appraisal**

3.1 The current criteria for the provision of speed reactive signs are contained in Policy Summary PS4/29 (Appendix 1 to this report) which was approved by the Cabinet in June 2003 as part of the County Council's new Speed Management Strategy.

3.2 In light of the Project Board's recommendations, a detailed review of PS4/29 has now been undertaken, taking into account national guidance from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), the Department for Transport (DfT) and existing approved policies from other Local Authorities. This resulted in the production of a revised draft policy summary (Appendix 2 to this report) which was presented to the Scrutiny Committee for Transport and Environment in September 2005. The Committee noted the outcome of the review and recommended that the new policy be formally submitted to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for approval, subject to further clarification being provided in respect of the criteria relating to 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and average speeds.

3.3 The common theme from the review was that if VAS are to continue to be a success and maintain driver respect they should only be used at sites demonstrating a crash problem associated with inappropriate speed. Whilst recommendation R4 only refers to VAS supporting speed limit compliance it is important to note that they are also of great benefit as a hazard warning, for example on the approach to bends and junctions. It is for this reason that the proposed new policy summary continues to cater for both types of VAS, assessing them on an equal basis; rather than having two separate methods, which could prove problematic when prioritising implementation within the available budget each year.

3.4 Preparation of the new policy summary has therefore taken into consideration the issues raised in recommendation R4 along with the opportunity to update its content and simplify the assessment process. The main revisions can be summarised as follows:

- Revised two stage assessment process – sites demonstrating a minimum of 4 injury crashes over the most recent three-year period of available data are investigated in detail. This brings the policy in line with the current intervention level used for the assessment of local road safety improvements.
- Simplified priority assessment mechanism based on the severity of the crashes occurring.

3.6 It is important to note that VAS are just one of a wide range of measures that are capable of affecting a driver's choice of speed. Whilst the proposed revised policy continues to cater for single site assessments it does not prevent the installation of VAS as a supporting measure at locations identified via other approved assessment methods (e.g. traffic calming schemes and speed limits) which continue to take into account the 'quality of life' issues highlighted by the Scrutiny Committee Project Board.

#### **4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

4.1 The proposed revisions to policy summary PS4/29 will ensure that the implementation of VAS is channelled towards those sites demonstrating the greatest need i.e. a quantifiable road safety concern combined with inappropriate speed for the conditions. In addition, the simplified assessment process should help to provide a clearer and more transparent approach to their placement, that the general public will find easier to understand. I therefore recommend that the revised policy PS4/29 - Provision of Vehicle Activated Signs be approved for use.

BOB WILKINS  
Director of Transport and Environment

Contact Officer: Paul Smart (Tel 01273 482117)  
Local Member(s): All

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS** - None.

## EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY  
SUMMARY

**PROVISION OF SPEED REACTIVE SIGNS**  
**PS 4/29**

Purpose of Policy

To set out the guidelines for the site selection of Speed Reactive Signs in East Sussex and apply a consistent standard across the county.

Specific Policies

Sites will only be considered for Speed Reactive Signs if the following guidelines are satisfied:

1. In accordance with Appendix A attached, the accident/casualty weighting score over the most recent three year period must achieve a minimum of 15 points over a distance of up to 1,500 metres.
2. By analysis of the causation factors it must be demonstrated that speeding was a contributory factor in some or all of the collisions.
3. For signs covering the enforcement of speed limits, the 85% ile speed at the site must be at or above the ACPO ( Association of Chief Police Officers ) guidelines for enforcement ie 10% above speed limit plus 2 mph.
4. For the enforcement of speed limits, at least 20% of the drivers must be exceeding the posted speed limit.

( See Appendix A to this policy - criteria for the Site Selection of Speed Reactive Signs )

Supporting Statement

Adherence to these guidelines ensures consistency in the introduction of Speed Reactive Signs on a countywide basis. Lower vehicle speeds are conducive to casualty reduction and, from an environmental aspect, produce an improvement for local residents.

References - Further Information  
of Approval

Date

East Sussex County Council - Speed Management Strategy  
Sussex Police - Speed Enforcement Standard



<b>No</b>	<b>Assessment Category</b>	<b>Data Origin</b>	<b>Basis of data collection</b>	<b>Number of weighting points awarded</b>
1	Accident <sup>1</sup>	Police Injury Road Accident Records	Fatal Serious Slight	Three points for each accident Two points for each accident One point for each accident
2	Casualty	Police Injury Road Accident Records	Fatal Serious Slight	Three points for each casualty Two points for each casualty One point for each casualty
3	Speed Related Personal Injury Accidents (PIAs)	Police Injury Road Accident Records	Factors of 'Excess speed' and 'Following too close'	One point for each accident in one of these causation factors. <b>No further action unless at least one speed related accident.</b>
4	85th Percentile	Data Collection loops or Spot Speed Survey	ACPO Guidelines (10% + 2mph)	<b>For "Speed Limit Reminder" signs - No further action unless 85<sup>th</sup> percentile at least at or above ACPO guidelines. For all other sign types no speed related criteria.</b>
5	Accident /Casualty Weighting	Criteria assessment sheet	Add the total weighting points for accidents, casualties and speed related accidents	<b>No further action unless minimum total of 15 points identified.</b>
6	Geographical Location	Subjective assessment and site survey		No further action if suitable site location cannot be determined.
7	No other engineering solutions are appropriate			The site has been visited by a qualified road safety engineer and there are no obvious viable measures to improve road safety along this stretch of road.

<sup>1</sup> Length of road assessed to be up to 1,500 metres, 3 year data period to be assessed.

**N.B.** The criteria are to be used for single site assessment. It should not prevent the use of speed reactive signs at other appropriate locations (i.e. School Safety Zones, Traffic Calming Schemes) the need for which has been formally identified by other assessment methods.

## EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

**LEAD MEMBER – TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**POLICY SUMMARY**

<b>PROVISION OF VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS (VAS)</b>	<b>PS4/29</b>	
<p><b>PURPOSE OF POLICY</b></p> <p>To set out the criteria to be met for the provision of VAS in East Sussex to ensure that a consistent standard is applied across the county.</p>		
<p><b>SPECIFIC POLICIES</b></p> <p>Sites to be considered for the provision of VAS will be subjected to a two stage assessment process as follows:</p> <p><b>Stage 1 (Preliminary Investigation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the crash history of the site over the most recent three-year period of available data shall be undertaken.</li> <li>• The site length under assessment shall not exceed 1500m per VAS.</li> <li>• Only those sites demonstrating a minimum of 4 crashes involving personal injury over the most recent three year period of available data shall progress to Stage 2 (Detailed Investigation).</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2 (Detailed Investigation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites shall be prioritised for detailed investigation on the total number of injury crashes. Sites demonstrating an equal number of crashes will be further prioritised using a severity ratio (derived from the number of crashes involving death or serious injury divided by the total number of injury crashes). Note: The national standard for reporting and recording injury crashes classifies them in respect of the most severely injured casualty (either fatal, serious or slight).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued overleaf)</p>		
<p><b>SUPPORTING STATEMENT</b></p> <p>This policy will ensure consistency in the provision of VAS, maximising their impact on improving road safety by ensuring that they are only installed at sites demonstrating a crash problem associated with inappropriate speed.</p>		
<p><b>REFERENCES – FURTHER INFORMATION</b></p> <p>Cabinet Committee  Lead Member for Transport and Environment Meeting –  10/10/2005</p>	<p><b>DATE OF APPROVAL</b></p> <p>24 June 2003</p>	<p><b>DATE OF REVIEW</b></p>

## SPECIFIC POLICIES (CONTINUED)

- A survey shall be undertaken to review the existing site conditions. This shall include an audit of furniture, fixed signs, road surfacing and road markings to assess their standard and condition. VAS shall not be deployed unless it is clear that the problem cannot be remedied by improving the fixed signing and that no other engineering solutions are appropriate.
- A detailed crash investigation shall be undertaken to identify dominant crash patterns to confirm that VAS are an appropriate remedial measure and if so, the nature of the message i.e. hazard warning or speed limit reminder.
- Monitoring of traffic speeds shall be undertaken at sites where a survey has identified that VAS may be a suitable solution, to establish whether a problem with inappropriate speed exists.

For speed limit reminder signs, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds shall be at least 10% over the speed limit + 2 mph, as detailed in the table below:

Speed Limit	85 <sup>th</sup> %ile criteria (10% + 2 mph)	Approximate equivalent average speed
20 mph	24 mph	20 mph
30 mph	35 mph	29 mph
40 mph	46 mph	38 mph
50 mph	57 mph	48 mph
60 mph	68 mph	57 mph
70 mph	79 mph	66 mph

Note: The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at, or below, which 85 percent of the traffic is travelling, or viewed another way the speed that only 15 percent of drivers exceed.

### Additional Information

- This policy shall be used for single site assessment and shall not prevent the installation of VAS as a supporting measure at locations identified via other approved assessment methods (e.g. traffic calming schemes & speed limits).