

Speed Management in Lincolnshire



**A report by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny
Committee**

June 2014

Speed Management in Lincolnshire

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Introduction
Councillor Michael Brookes
Chairman of the Task and Finish Group



Highways is a universal service which affects everyone. Speeding is raised as a priority consistently across the County. Speed management is a complex topic, which generates strong and often divided opinion, as can be seen from the submissions we have considered as part of this review.

Effective speed management is not just about speed limits but involves appropriate signage and marking, infrastructure improvements, education and enforcement. Whilst many people have a shared concern for effective speed management, opinion is mixed over the best methods to employ to reach the best outcome. It is important to take an approach to speed management across Lincolnshire that will ensure consistency and transparency in dealing with issues.

The purpose of the review was not to find solutions to specific sites but to take a strategic overview of the issues. Many people who took part in the review submitted details of roads where it was perceived that there were problems. These issues have been taken note of by the Task and Finish Group and will be passed on to the Highways department for them to review.

The views of the public have been at the heart of this review and I and the Task and Finish Group would like to express our thanks to everyone who has contributed to our work by completing the survey, attending a Focus Group or by just letting us know your views.

In concluding I would wish to thank the Members of the Task and Finish Group for their efforts as we went about our work. Also, to those people from the numerous bodies and groups who came and talked to us about their concerns and above all, to Graeme Butler (Projects Manager), Andy Wharff (Area Highways Manager), Mike Nicholls (Highways Network Manager), Rob Hewis (Public Health Officer), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer) who have supported us in our work.

Councillor Michael Brookes
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1.0 Executive Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The review into Speed Management in Lincolnshire was established in September 2013 with the purpose of reviewing the County Council's existing speed management policies in line with new Government guidance and concerns which had been raised by local people.

The Task and Finish Group met nine times over the course of the review during which it considered the County Council's current speed management policies, developed and widely circulated a speed management survey, held a number of focus groups and undertook site visits to see for themselves the issues around the County.

The Department for Transport issued new guidance on setting speed limits in January 2013 and the County Council must have regard to this guidance when setting limits. As part of its work the Task and Finish Group considered the existing Speed Limit Policy against this new guidance.

Conclusions

Having considered all of the information made available during the review the Task and Finish Group has made a number of conclusions following its review:

- The majority of respondents believe that the current speed limits in the County are about right, however a number of individual roads give cause for concern. The perceived lack of enforcement of these current speed limits is the issue people are concerned about.
- There was not wide spread support for 20mph limits and zones in areas other than schools. However the Task and Finish Group have noted that the Government is to commission research on their effectiveness and the County Council may wish to look at this again in the future.
- There is widespread support for School Safety Zones or 20mph speed limits outside of schools, where it is appropriate. There are concerns around other issues such as inconsiderate parking by parents and the advisory nature of the zones. The Task and Finish Group support the view that each site needs to be considered on an individual basis and that a blanket introduction of zones is not appropriate.
- The use of vehicle activated/reactive flashing signs is seen as the most successful way in achieving appropriate traffic speeds. The use of physical measures such as speed humps is not supported but the use of softer measures such as gateways into villages is.
- Community Speed Watch is a welcome initiative that could benefit many of the communities in Lincolnshire, particularly those in rural locations.
- Parish and town councils feel engaged with the consultation process when speed management issues are being proposed, however there are some concerns about how consultation takes place in those non-parished areas.

- Having considered the Government's guidance and the County Council's existing Speed Limit Policy on how to define a village or settlement, the County Council's current Policy makes it easier for a settlement to be defined than the Government's guidance.

Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group submit the following recommendations to the Executive:

Village and Rural Limits

Recommendation 1 (page 19)

That the criteria for identifying a settlement contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained.

Recommendation 2 (page 19)

That the current gaps within lengths of development provision contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained.

Recommendation 3 (page 20)

That the borderline cases provision contained in the current Speed Limit Policy should be amended so that if the length and number of development units fronting the road under review is within 20% (currently 10%) of that required or that the mean speed data falls within +/- 5mph (currently +/- 1mph) of the Mean Speed Limit Table these are classed as borderline cases. Under these circumstances any requests to change the speed limit are considered by the Planning and Regulation Committee. The local member should continue to be consulted on these cases prior to consideration at the Committee.

That if this recommendation is accepted that it is reviewed 12 months after its implementation to ensure that the parameters are set at the correct level.

Recommendation 4 (page 20)

That a menu of options for those sites which have speed issues but which are not appropriate for a lowering of the speed limit, e.g. bends and junctions, be developed.

20mph Limits and Zones

Recommendation 5 (page 21)

That the current 20mph speed limit provision contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained and that any requests for a 20mph speed limit should be assessed on a case by case basis.

School Safety Measures

Recommendation 6 (page 22)

That a toolkit is developed for consideration of any requests for school safety measures. This should detail a menu of options for possible solutions to address specific issues at individual sites and include a flowchart which explains the process to reach the most appropriate solution.

Recommendation 7 (page 22)

That when school safety measures are implemented, the school works in partnership with the County Council to support the work being done on speed management, including reviewing regularly their School Travel Plan.

Speed Management Strategy

Recommendation 8 (page 23)

That the County Council develop an overarching Speed Management Strategy which incorporates all elements of speed management including speed limits and school safety measures.

Community Speed Watch

Recommendation 9 (page 25)

That the Community Speed Watch scheme is endorsed and that it is included within the proposed Speed Management Strategy as a self-help tool for parish and town councils in managing speeding issues.

2.0 Establishment of the Task and Finish Group

On 9 September 2013, the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee recommended that a time limited Task and Finish Group should be established to review Lincolnshire County Council's current speed management policies. This recommendation was agreed by the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 26 September 2013 and non-executive councillors of the County Council were subsequently invited to join a Task and Finish Group.

A group of nine county councillors met initially in late October 2013 to agree the scope of the review. It was agreed that the Task and Finish Group would review the County Council's current speed management policies:

- In light of revised guidance from the Department of Transport
- Following concerns raised by some communities that the current policy does not allow for the necessary flexibility to ensure appropriate speed limits for Lincolnshire's highway conditions.

At its first meeting the Task and Finish Group agreed that the review would consider the following speed management issues:

- National guidance
- Urban speed limits
- Rural speed limits
- Village speed limits
- 20mph speed limits and zones
- Enforcement
- Traffic Calming

The Group met on nine occasions between October 2013 and May 2014.

3.0 National Legislation and Guidance

A speed limit indicates the maximum speed of travel that it is safe for the large majority of road users on the road, under good conditions. The limits are not intended to be a target and drivers should adopt lower speeds where necessary if travelling at the speed limit is inappropriate.

There are currently three national speed limits in place¹:



roads with street lighting (Restricted Roads)



single carriageway roads



dual carriageways and motorways



national default speed limit

The national default speed limits apply to all roads unless other signs show otherwise. Highways authorities have the power to vary speed limits in those situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is different from the relevant national limit. When setting local limits highways authorities must have regard to guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) – Department for Transport Circular 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits. A copy of the guidance can be found at the following link - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>.

This guidance was published in January 2013 alongside a new speed limit appraisal tool. The guidance sets out certain general principles as well as detailed guidance. Factors taken into account in the assessment of a speed limit should include the:

¹ Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

- General character of the road or area
- Type and extent of roadside development
- Accident history
- Current traffic speed
- Enforcement
- Environmental impact

The guidance also states that speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel and should also encourage self-compliance.

3.1 Enforcement

Enforcement is only one part of speed management; however it has become clear as part of this review that it is seen as one of the key concerns that people have.

Once a speed limit has been set, the only people with powers to enforce it are the police. The perceived lack of enforcement by the police was highlighted in both the survey and focus groups.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued revised Speed Enforcement Policy Guidelines in May 2013. The guidelines make clear that driving at any speed over the limit is an offence and the police are not restricted and may prosecute in appropriate cases. In deciding on enforcement, one of the factors they would consider would be how unclear or confusing the relevant signage was or how a site simply did not feel like a road of that speed. The enforcement of speed limits was generally related, and proportionate, to the risks to all road users using that road and the availability of resources.

The speed enforcement guidelines issued by ACPO are endorsed by Lincolnshire Police.

Information provided by Lincolnshire Police shows that they do take action when speeding offences occur as shown below:

Speeding Offences – Camera and Tickets	2012	2013
Total	49,136	51,377
Attended Speed Awareness Course	23,809	21,551
Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice	19,220	21,356
Prosecution	5,276	5,897

4.0 Engagement during the Review

From the outset of the review, the Task and Finish Group agreed that its key priority was to listen directly to the people who lived and worked in Lincolnshire and not to try and impose its views on them. To achieve this, a number of engagement tools were used to enable them to see, hear and consider the views of the people of Lincolnshire. These included undertaking a number of site visits, developing a speed management survey and holding a number of focus groups throughout the County.

In undertaking this review it was agreed first to issue the survey and then use the outcomes of that exercise to develop the key lines of enquiry at the focus groups. Alongside this process the site visits enabled councillors to see for themselves what the issues were in different parts of the County, both rural and urban.

Site Visits

A number of site visits were held to give councillors an understanding of what the speed issues were within the County. These visits provided an excellent opportunity for councillors to see for themselves what the issues were for local people. Visits included:

- A15 around Bourne
- B118 Branston
- A153 West Willoughby
- A607 Fulbeck
- Boston – A52 Swineshead Road
- Boston – A1121 Boardsides
- Boston – A16 Sibsey Road
- A158 Hagworthingham
- A153 Haltham
- Mablethorpe
- A16 Swaby
- B1198 Scampton – Cammeringham
- B1308 Monks Road Lincoln
- B1192 Martin
- A607 Bracebridge Heath – Waddington
- C755 Abbey Road Swineshead
- Louth Town Centre

These sites were selected because they were either already subject to a number of requests to lower the speed limit, they had an accident record or they had been identified by the local County Councillor and others as an area of concern.

The visits involved two or three councillors along with Highways Officers travelling the relevant road in a Highways Inspection Vehicle, first at the existing speed limit and then at lower speeds. This provided a valuable opportunity for councillors to get a feel for the roads and by varying the speed to consider what speed felt an appropriate limit.

Speed Management Survey

A survey on speed management issues was developed and sent to all parish and town councils in Lincolnshire, people who had made contact about the review, other special interest groups and it was also made available on the County Council's website. The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils for their assistance in helping to circulate the survey.

The survey asked a number of questions around speed limits; 20mph limits and zones; School Safety Zones; traffic calming and whether parish and town councils felt engaged in the process when speed limits were being set. A copy of the survey is attached at Appendix A and a full copy of the results is available from the Scrutiny Team.

The Task and Finish Group wish to put on record its appreciation for the excellent response to the survey, with 601 responses being received. This response confirmed to the Task and Finish Group that engagement with the public was the essential element of the review.

Focus Groups

A number of focus groups were held around the County to talk to local people directly. The Groups were held in:

- Horncastle
- Lincoln
- Market Rasen
- Sleaford

The Groups were led by councillors from the Task and Finish Group and invitees were drawn from those who had submitted representations outside of the survey and people and groups who had been put forward by local County Councillors.

Representatives included:

- Ancaster Parish Council
- Bourne Town Council
- Branston Parish Council
- Caistor Town Council
- Doddington and Whisby Parish Council
- Drivers Union
- Fulbeck Parish Council
- Hagworthingham Parish Council
- Harpswell Parish Council
- Hemswell Parish Council
- Horncastle Town Council
- Monks Road Neighbourhood Initiative, Lincoln
- Ruskington Parish Council

- Stanhope Road Traffic Calming Initiative, Horncastle
- Swineshead Parish Council
- West End Residents Association, Lincoln
- West Willoughby Parish Council

The focus group approach was chosen by the Task and Finish Group to enable it to gather a qualitative insight to confirm the outcomes of the survey. It enabled councillors to ask people directly about their perceptions around speed and seek their views on how speeding issues could be addressed. This interactive setting allowed people to talk freely with other group members and share ideas and opinions.

A full copy of the outcomes from the focus groups is available from the Scrutiny Team.

Other submissions

A number of people and groups made submissions to the Task and Finish Group outside of the survey and focus group processes. These included:

- Ancaster Parish Council
- Bigby Parish Council
- Branston & Mere Parish Council
- Drivers Union
- Hagworthingham Parish Council
- Stanhope Road Residents
- Transport Group of Stamford Transition Town

A number of submissions were also submitted through Councillor Mrs Helen Powell, following a public meeting she had organised in Bourne in November 2013.

'Time for 20' Annual Conference

20's Plenty for Us is a 'not for profit' organisation which campaigns for 20mph to become the default speed limit on residential and urban streets. They now have over 200 local campaigns around the country.

Louise Tyers, Scrutiny Officer attended the 20's Plenty campaign's 'Time for 20' Annual Conference held at Camden Town Hall, London in February 2014. Presentations were given around the implementation of 20mph zones and there were also presentations on people's attitudes to 20mph limits, the public health benefits and a European perspective. A recorded question and answer session with Robert Goodwill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport was shown. Mr Goodwill confirmed that local authorities should be free to make their own decisions about speed limits in line with localism principles, all speed limits should be enforced and whilst there was large support for 20mph limits it was not yet possible to say that 20mph was the norm.

The Conference also heard the experiences of councils which had introduced or were about to introduce, 20mph zones in their areas. These included the London Borough of Camden, Bath & North East Somerset, Cambridge and the City of London. The key

points made by these councils were:

- It is not an anti-car policy
- The right national policy needs to be in place to enable implementation
- An extensive public transport network needs to run alongside the schemes
- Enforcement of the zones is the key concern to residents so there is a need to engage with the police around enforcement from the beginning. In some areas the police had indicated that they would take action if there was a problem but would not generally enforce the zones.
- The main reason for introducing the zones is casualty reduction
- Good, early engagement with local communities is needed
- Most schemes use signs and road markings with no physical measures
- It must be made clear to people why the zones are being brought in and people who drive need to feel that there is a benefit to them

Bristol was one of the areas where a city wide 20mph scheme had been introduced and they had commissioned the University of West of England to undertake a survey of attitudes and behaviours towards 20mph limits. The survey established that most people who broke speed limits did not mean to do so and just did not notice the limit. There was clear general support for 20mph limits in those areas which had introduced them but there was a widespread belief that the police would not enforce speed limits and the introduction of any scheme needed behavioural interventions, e.g. reactive signs, to run alongside.

5.0 Speed Management Survey

The Speed Management Survey had an excellent response with 601 returns. The breakdown of returns is shown below:

Group	Number
Total Responses*	601
County Councillors	13
District/Town/Parish Councillors	201
Police Officers	1
Special Interest Groups	36
Highways Officers	8
Lincolnshire Residents	294
Local Government Officers	48
Other	44

*It needs to be noted that respondents may have ticked more than one group.

Setting Priorities

Respondents were asked to score how important a number of different factors were when setting priorities. The factors were congestion; economic issues; environment; road safety; speed cameras and speed bumps; speed enforcement by the Police; speed limits in towns and villages; and 20mph limits and zones. They were also asked to suggest any other factors that should be considered.

Most respondents believed that road safety was the most important factor when setting priorities followed by speed limits in towns & villages and congestion. The lowest priority was seen as speed cameras and speed humps. Other suggested priorities included safety for cyclists; use of local knowledge and concerns, highway maintenance; and the quality of life of residents.

A number of respondents also suggested that the planning process should be better used to ensure that the impact of any new development on existing road conditions and road safety should be considered before granting planning permission. A suggestion was also put forward that there should be mandatory speed calming measures for any development where a road existed.

The views of the motorist were also felt to be an important consideration as some people believed that too often speed limits rose up and down without any perceived reason. A warning was also given that the views of the minority in a community should not override the view of the majority.

Current Speed Limits

Respondents were also asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the speed limits on main roads (A and B class roads); rural roads (C and unclassified roads) and roads in towns and villages. They were asked to indicate if they felt that they were generally too low, about right or too high. It was pleasing to note that the majority of respondents felt that the limits on Lincolnshire's road were generally about right. However certain roads were perceived to have specific problems.

20mph Limits and Zones

There were already a number of 20mph limits and zones in Lincolnshire and the survey asked that if there was an opportunity for the County Council to expand the implementation of these limits and zones in the future, where could the limits and zones be placed. The three options were outside all statutory age schools; residential streets (excluding A and B roads); and town and village centre areas. Respondents were also asked to identify any other areas which would be suitable for a 20mph limit or zone.

Responses showed that there was clear support for 20mph limits and zones outside all statutory age schools. Whilst the introduction of a limit or zone was supported there was a very strong view that they should only be operational during school hours or at specific times of the day such as the start and end of the school day.

The support for limits and zones in residential streets and town and village centre areas was mixed. Other suggested locations for zones included near parks and recreational areas; near older people's accommodation/centres and other areas of high pedestrian footfall such as shopping areas that have high traffic volumes.

A number of people believed that without appropriate enforcement the limits and zones would not be effective and without this it would be pointless to introduce them.

School Safety Zones

A majority of respondents felt that whilst school safety zones had been effective in addressing speed reduction and improving pedestrian safety they did not believe that they had been as effective in reducing congestion. It was believed that the main issue around schools was the inconsiderate parking by parents when dropping off or collecting their children.

A number of suggestions were made that parking restrictions either side of a school entrance should be introduced, but a number of people also stated that this would only move the parking problem to surrounding areas.

A big concern with the zones was that at the current time they were only advisory and therefore not enforceable. It was stated by some that unless they were made enforceable then there was no point in having them.

Traffic Calming

The survey asked respondents what they perceived to be the most effective traffic calming measures. It was suggested that vehicle activated/reactive flashing signs and physical measures were the most effective. However, the use of road humps was not supported. Softer measures such as gateways were preferred as a way of marking the entry to a village and this was also picked up by the focus groups.

There were opposing views as to the use of speed cameras with some people seeing fixed speed cameras as easily avoidable by serial speeders but others stating that there should be more use of spot speed cameras in areas where there was a specific speeding problem. A view was also put forward that adding more signage could be counterproductive as it could distract drivers.

Enforcement

It is clear from the survey that respondents believe that without effective police enforcement changing speed limits would make little difference. Putting in unrealistic speed limits as a result of public pressure was also seen as a waste of time as there was a belief that people would not adhere to them. It was accepted that the police did use enforcement where possible, however other duties prevented local officers being out a large part of the time enforcing speed limits. More random speed checking by the police, particularly at busy times was supported.

Consultation

Responses to the survey suggested that there was a perception with some people that the County Council only consulted on proposals once a decision had been taken and therefore did not undertake proper consultation. The Task and Finish Group hope that the

approach taken around engagement as part of this review will reassure people that councillors do want to hear people's views on issues which affect them.

6.0 Focus Groups

A number of issues around speed limits were also identified in the focus groups. These included:

- Whether the use of mean speeds (measuring the average speed of traffic passing a fixed point over a fixed period of time) was the appropriate measure when setting speed limits.
- Support for the use of local knowledge when setting speed limits.
- Concerns at the speeds of HGVs – 40mph was seen as too slow and often led to dangerous overtaking manoeuvres by other vehicle drivers.
- A new Policy needed to include a discretionary element when setting speed limits.
- There should be better use of the planning process when dealing with new developments and speed limits should be incorporated at the planning stage. There was a belief by some that the Highways department did not appear to be fully engaged in the application process.

As with the survey, there was general support for 20mph limits and zones outside of schools but again with the view that they should only be operational during school hours or at the start and end of the school day. For other areas 20mph should only be introduced when it was beneficial to safety and a better environment. It was also felt that the County Council needed to remember the motorist and not to confuse them with too many varying speed limits.

Again, there was a lack of support for physical traffic calming measures such as speed humps but favoured measures included chicanes, Speed Indication Devices (SIDS), roundels on the road and gradual speed reductions into villages. The use of gateways was also supported as they were seen as an effective way of slowing traffic by indicating to the driver that they were now entering a village.

People who had attended the focus groups thanked the Task and Finish Group for holding the meetings as they very much welcomed the opportunity to be able to make comments directly to County Councillors.

7.0 Speed Management in Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire is a large, sparsely populated county with approximately 718,000 people spread out over an area of 2,350 square miles and has a highway network of approximately 5,500 miles. In the county, pedestrian casualties are low but there is a problem in reducing the speed of vehicles at certain locations. Speed management issues are regularly raised at parish and town council meetings.

7.1 Current Speed Limit Policy

Lincolnshire County Council has a Speed Limit Policy which has been in place since July 2008. A copy of the existing policy can be found at Appendix B to this report.

Both people at the focus groups and respondents to the survey believed that the current policy was inflexible and did not allow highways professionals the ability to use their discretion where appropriate when setting speed limits.

During its consideration of the Policy, the Task and Finish Group fully supported the view that a policy was needed which allowed flexibility when necessary. A one size fits all approach would not meet all of the conflicting demands on the county's roads and the ability to use discretion should be a key point of any future policy.

The Task and Finish Group has noted that the existing Speed Limit Policy did already contain a provision to deal with borderline cases and as part of its discussions, the Task and Finish Group considered whether the current provision continued to meet the needs of the County's roads.

The Task and Finish Group acknowledge that it is frustrating for those communities who did not quite meet the density levels or mean speed data required for a change in the speed limit and they were now proposing that the parameters of the provision be reviewed to increase flexibility along with a proviso that any change is reviewed 12 months after its implementation to ensure that it is set at the correct level.

As with the existing policy any requests to change a speed limit under these circumstances should still be considered by the Planning and Regulation Committee.

The Task and Finish Group also believe that early engagement with local councillors on these borderline cases is essential to try and solve any issues at an early stage.

7.2 Existing Speed Limits

When setting a speed limit it is important that the level is appropriate to the location, taking into account the varying and rural nature of the network in Lincolnshire. There is also a need to balance the needs of the environment and community against the strategic and economic benefits as well as ensuring that appropriate enforcement can be taken. Where it is safe and possible to do so the priority is to keep traffic moving. It is acknowledged that often people wanted to use speed limits to control the speeds of people who were perceived as driving inappropriately.

In producing a Speed Management Policy the County Council has to take lots of factors into account. Prioritising issues allows the right amount of resources to be directed into the areas that have the most benefit to successful speed management.

Having considered the evidence from the review, the Task and Finish Group has concluded that the majority of people feel that the current speed limits across the county are about right as long as they are effectively enforced.

7.3 Village Speed Limits

DfT Circular 01/2013 states that it is the Government's policy that a 30mph speed limit should be the normal limit through villages. This guidance is supported by advice² which proposes that reasonable minimum criteria for the definition of what constitutes a village, for the purpose of applying a speed limit of 30mph, would be that there are 20 or more houses and a minimum length of 600 metres. It also states that extra allowance should be made for other key buildings, such as churches, shops or schools. Councils are encouraged to use their discretion when deciding whether a lower speed limit was appropriate where the character of a village fell outside this definition.

In setting a speed limit for a village or settlement, the County Council's existing Policy uses a weighting system to calculate the number of units which front the road which is under review. Development units are weighted according to the type of level of activity as follows:

Development	Activity	Units
Private Residence		1
Shop, Village Hall, Farm, Church, Business Premises, Playing Fields, Playground, Play Areas, etc.	Low	3
	High	5
Schools	Low	6
	High	10
Junction with:		
Hierarchy 1 Road		6
Hierarchy 2 Road		5
Hierarchy 3 Road		4
Hierarchy 4 Road		3
Hierarchy 5 Road		2

This criterion provides a more flexible approach than the Government's guidance as it already includes consideration of other units such as shops, schools and churches as part of its calculation. Also, the County Council's policy states that a minimum length of 300m is required for a speed limit.

Both the focus groups and the survey generally supported the introduction of a 30mph speed limit in villages and other areas which needed protection. However, again there was concern around the enforcement of those limits.

One of the issues which had been highlighted during the review was speed limits rising up and down without any perceived reason, particularly on rural roads. This was also observed by councillors during their site visits. During their consideration of the Speed Limit Policy it was explained to the Task and Finish Group that the current policy contained a provision to deal with gaps between lengths of development. The provision

² Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 – Village Speed Limits (DfT 2004)

covered those situations where there were gaps between two developments which had differing speed limits in place. This ensures that the different levels of limits are kept within one level change along and between developed areas. This potentially ensures a better level of compliance within the developed areas without having extreme changes in levels along short lengths of road. This was seen by the Task and Finish Group as a sensible way forward and it was proposed that the current gaps provision contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained.

A request had been received by the Task and Finish Group to consider how caravan parks were dealt with in the policy, whether the park was considered as one unit or if each individual caravan was considered as a separate unit. Officers confirmed that caravan parks were treated no differently to any other location. If there was only one access on to a road then it was classed as one unit. Larger caravan parks may need to score higher if they had a number of accesses. This led to a more detailed discussion on how to deal with those parts of the network which had awkward sites but where the introduction of a speed limit would not be appropriate, e.g. junctions and bends. Again, the Task and Finish Group believe that a one size approach would not be appropriate and that each site needed to be considered on its own merits. Having a menu of options of possible solutions, such as signage, would be a good way of arriving at an appropriate solution.

During the focus groups a number of people suggested that the use of mean speed limits was not appropriate when setting speed limits and the 85th Percentile³ should be used. However, the Task and Finish Group is aware that the DfT Guidance states that mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits.

The Task and Finish Group feel that whilst 30mph would make some villages feel a lot safer, a lot of the county's key arterial roads ran through these villages and there needed to be a balance to ensure traffic kept moving.

Having considered both the Government's guidance and the County Council's existing Speed Limit Policy on how to define a village or settlement, the Task and Finish Group believes that the County Council's current policy makes it easier for a settlement to be defined than the Government's guidance and therefore the current provision should be maintained.

Recommendation 1

That the criteria for identifying a settlement contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained.

Recommendation 2

That the current gaps within lengths of development provision contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained.

³ Speed at which no more than 85% of traffic is exceeding

Recommendation 3

That the borderline cases provision contained in the current Speed Limit Policy should be amended so that if the length and number of development units fronting the road under review is within 20% (currently 10%) of that required or that the mean speed data falls within +/- 5mph (currently +/- 1mph) of the Mean Speed Limit Table these are classed as borderline cases. Under these circumstances any requests to change the speed limit are considered by the Planning and Regulation Committee. The local member should continue to be consulted on these cases prior to consideration at the Committee.

That if this recommendation is accepted that it is reviewed 12 months after its implementation to ensure that the parameters are set at the correct level.

Recommendation 4

That a menu of options for those sites which have speed issues but which are not appropriate for a lowering of the speed limit, e.g. bends and junctions, be developed.

7.4 20mph Limits and Zones

The national speed limit on street lit roads is 30mph. However a number of local authorities are now introducing 20mph speed limits or zones on streets where they were being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable. They should not be introduced where motor vehicle movement was the road's primary function. Where they were introduced, general compliance needed to be achievable without a reliance on enforcement.

The DfT guidance states that traffic authorities should keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances, and to consider the introduction of more 20mph limits and zones, over time. Campaigners, such as the 20s Plenty for Us campaign, have long been calling for mandatory 20mph limits in residential areas but this is not a position currently mandated by the Government.

The Task and Finish Group has been made aware that the DfT are about to commission research into the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits. Whilst the Government believes that there is evidence to support the view that 20mph zones are effective, they accept that there is an evidence gap on the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits. The proposed research will set out to 'establish the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits, in a range of settings'. The DfT states that while data from existing schemes, including Portsmouth and Bristol, indicates possible benefits, the evidence is inconclusive. Unfortunately the final report from the research is not expected until early 2017 and the County Council may wish to look at this particular issue again once the findings of the research have been published.

During its consideration of 20mph limits and zones, the Task and Finish Group accepted that the limits may be appropriate in some specific locations, such as outside schools, children's play areas, shopping areas or other areas where there was a lot of activity; however a blanket 20mph limit across residential areas was not appropriate. In some

cases requests had been received for a 20mph limit but often it was not possible to drive at more than that speed so a 20mph zone would not improve the situation. The Task and Finish Group believes that the current 20mph speed limit provision in the policy is adequate and that any requests for a 20mph speed limit should be assessed on a case by case basis.

Recommendation 5

That the current 20mph speed limit provision contained within the existing Speed Limit Policy should be maintained and that any requests for a 20mph speed limit should be assessed on a case by case basis.

7.5 School Safety Zones

The purpose of School Safety Zones (SSZ) is to provide a safe environment for children entering and leaving school by discouraging drivers from parking or stopping within the zone and to drive at a maximum speed of 20mph during school hours. The zones are currently advisory as they are only necessary for a short period during the day.

The zones were first introduced in Lincolnshire in 2002 and since that time 90 zones have been installed. The zones are not suitable for all schools and it is the view of the Task and Finish Group that each site needs to be considered on an individual basis.

All schools in Lincolnshire have a School Travel Plan in place. The aims of the Plans are to:

- Reduce congestion outside school
- Get more children, parents and staff physically active on the school journey
- Reduce carbon emissions from the journey to school
- Improve the sustainable transport infrastructure and facilities at school

The Task and Finish Group believe that these are a useful tool in supporting the work of the County Council on speed management around schools. However to be effective the Plans need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

A number of school sites were visited as part of the site visits. During these visits it was clear that each school has different issues, for example problems of parked vehicles or issues with speeding traffic and a standardised solution is therefore not appropriate.

The Task and Finish Group has considered a number of options, both advisory and mandatory, for possible solutions with respect to speed and/or congestion issues. For speed issues these include the use of advisory signage, advisory flashing signs, mandatory limits and mandatory part time variable message signs. Congestion options included 'School Keep Clear' (zig zags), waiting restrictions and loading restrictions. The Task and Finish Group also considered the option of maintaining the current school safety zones layout which includes an advisory 20mph speed limit and advisory zig-zag markings as these had proven effective in many locations. However, where the current policy has not delivered an effective outcome then a menu of options should be considered and tailored to deal with any site specific issues.

A large number of people who commented on SSZ as part of the survey or focus group commented on the advisory nature of the zones and that unless they were made mandatory then there was no point in having them. The Task and Finish Group has considered this view and believes that whilst making them mandatory may have advantages it would still be reliant on enforcement by the Police. There would also be considerable resource implications as each site would be required to have its own traffic order as it was not possible to implement a blanket order covering all schools. Again, flexibility is the priority in coming up with a solution and mandatory zones may not be appropriate for all schools due to the specific issues.

Whilst considering the possible options for solutions around schools, it has become clear that some of them have considerable cost implications. Whilst this should not be the key consideration in deciding the appropriate solution it is something that needs to be considered in the face of the financial pressures facing local government. SSZ are currently being implemented throughout the County and there is currently funding available. If there is a significant increase in requests then it may be necessary to develop a programme of implementing measures over a few years.

The Task and Finish Group firmly believe that effective speed management around schools can only be achieved by working in partnership. The County Council is not able to fix the problems on its own and it is important that the locality becomes involved in trying to find solutions. The Task and Finish Group also believe that schools need to take some responsibility with their travel plans by ensuring that they support the work being done in trying to address speed management in their area. Schools should also be prepared to make a contribution towards the various measures being implemented. However, this should not enable schools to decide what measures they had just because they had funding available. Any solution should be what was the most appropriate for that school.

At the current time the School Safety Zones initiative is a stand-alone policy. The Task and Finish Group believes that it would be more effective if it was part of an overall speed management strategy for the County Council, which should also cover speed limits and other speed management issues.

Recommendation 6

That a toolkit is developed for consideration of any requests for school safety measures. This should detail a menu of options for possible solutions to address specific issues at individual sites and include a flowchart which explains the process to reach the most appropriate solution.

Recommendation 7

That when school safety measures are implemented, the school works in partnership with the County Council to support the work being done on speed management, including reviewing regularly their School Travel Plan.

Recommendation 8

That the County Council develop an overarching Speed Management Strategy which incorporates all elements of speed management including speed limits and school safety measures.

7.6 Traffic Calming

There are mixed views on the impact of traffic calming measures in the County. Speed humps were widely condemned by those members of the public who referred to them, commenting that they damaged cars, increased pollution, impacted on emergency services vehicles and impacted residents with the noise made when vehicles drove over them. Softer measures such as chicanes and gateways were suggested as alternative options.

The use of roundels, road markings with a circle with the speed limit in the centre, was suggested as a more cost effective alternative to physical measures.



The use of vehicle activated signs was widely seen as the most effective way of reducing speed. They were seen as a good way of slowing down vehicles which were travelling at excessive speed. There was wide support to enable local communities to purchase speed reduction 'flashing signs'.

7.7 Community Speed Watch

During the review the Task and Finish Group received a presentation on a proposed Community Speed Watch scheme that the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) was planning to introduce. This scheme is designed to empower local communities to tackle non-safety critical speeding issues. The LRSP has recently trialled two new signs, one a visually impactful passive board and the other a reactive speed indication device, both of which are attach to posts within a community and are moveable. The signs are pictured below:



The intention of the scheme is to enable communities to purchase either or both types of signs and move them about within their community at agreed locations and for groups of smaller parishes to be able to share the signs. The primary benefit is that communities would have overall control of them in their locality but there would be countywide limits as to the amount of time they could be left in one place. Rotating the signs around a village would have more impact than keeping them in one place as it would keep the awareness of drivers.

The passive signs cost in the region of £5 each and the cost of reactive signs was around £2,000, dependent on the number of orders. The LRSP will coordinate the ordering of the signs as a large order from within Lincolnshire would enable the reactive signs to be purchased at a reduced cost.

The LRSP undertook a trial of the signs on the B6403 in Ancaster in March 2014. The trial was held over two weeks with a device placed at a different end of the village each week. Week 1 was in the north of the village and week 2 in the south.

The results of the trial showed that when a device was placed at the north of the village speed did drop but then went up again after the trial. There appeared to be no impact in the south but the average speed was already below the limit. However, it needs to be noted that the trial was held in the run up to Easter so the number of vehicles using the road may have been reduced. It is clear from the trial that good positioning of the device is important. The Task and Finish Group has been advised that the trial was well received by Ancaster Parish Council. The Strategy Board for the LRSP have also considered the outcomes of the trial and they also support moving forward with the scheme.

A suggestion had been made through the review that the County Council could look at procuring the signs on behalf of Parish Councils, however it is the view of the Task and Finish Group that it would be preferable for local councils to buy their own signs to reduce the administrative burden and risk to the County Council. Local councils would also have control and responsibility for their maintenance.

Having considered the feedback from the trial and the comments made through both the survey and focus groups, the Task and Finish Group fully endorse the Community Speed Watch Scheme and believe that it will be a helpful tool for local communities to use to manage speed. It is acknowledged that how the equipment could be purchased and shared across divisions in urban areas of the County needed to be considered to ensure that this opportunity was open to all communities.

Recommendation 9

That the Community Speed Watch scheme is endorsed and that it is included within the proposed Speed Management Strategy as a self-help tool for parish and town councils in managing speeding issues.

7.8 Engagement with Parish and Town Councils

The County Council has a statutory duty to consult with local town and parish councils on all new and/or changes to speed management issues as well as publically advertising a proposal.

In the survey local town and parish council respondents were asked to rate how engaged they felt in the process when the County Council was consulting on all new or changes to speed management in their areas.

The majority of parish and town council respondents stated that they did feel engaged with the consultation process. A number of comments were made about how the County Council engages with those areas which were not parished, for example in Lincoln, Grantham and Spalding, including how could residents without a parish or town council find out about the consultations, especially if they did not engage with local community or residents groups.

8.0 Contributors to the Review

The Members of the Task and Finish Group would like to extend their sincere thanks to the following people who have provided assistance during this Review:

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More Information

If you would like any more information about the work of Overview and Scrutiny at Lincolnshire County Council then please get in touch with the Scrutiny Team by calling 01522 552102 or by e-mailing the Team at scrutiny@lincolnshire.gov.uk.