

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 December 2014
Subject:	Speed Management - Borderline Cases Provision

Summary:

This report presents the results of the investigations relating to the Borderline Cases provision contained within the current Speed Limit Policy in relation to mean speed and whether further relaxation is appropriate.

Actions Required:

- i) To consider and comment on the data gathered in terms of threshold parameters for Borderline Cases.
- ii) To consider whether the current requirement of a Borderline Case in relation to mean speeds be kept at the current level of +/- 1mph or relaxed to +/- 2mph or +/- 3mph.

1. Background

A Task and Finish Group comprising nine non-executive County Councillors undertook a review of the Council's current speed management policies. Councillor Michael Brookes was appointed the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

On 9 June 2014, the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee approved the Speed Management in Lincolnshire final report. The report was presented to the Executive on 1 July 2014 and all the recommendations were agreed. The formal response to the recommendations and associated Action Plan is attached at Appendix A and was considered by this Committee in September 2014.

Recommendation 3 of the Action Plan required further investigations to be undertaken with respect to the level at which the borderline case criteria for mean speeds be set. Currently it is set at +/- 1mph. Any proposal within this range is reported to Planning and Regulation Committee for further and final consideration.

As part of the Task and Finish Group outcomes it was debated whether the current level could be relaxed to +/- 2mph or +/- 3mph thereby providing greater flexibility and discretion by Planning and Regulation Committee.

The current Speed Limit Policy states that:

'In circumstances where the length and density of development criteria are met but the mean speed data falls within +/-1 mph of the Mean Speed Limit Table, further speed readings are to be obtained along the length of road under review to determine overall mean speed readings'.

The attached table at Appendix B shows the mean speed results of the investigations carried out at the trial sites across the County.

The table also shows what the possible outcome would be if the level was relaxed to either +/- 2mph or +/- 3mph, for a proposed speed limit using the current Mean Speed Limit Table in the existing Speed Limit Policy below:

Mean Speed	Limit
< 32 mph	30 mph
33 – 42 mph	40 mph
>43 mph	50 mph

It needs to be noted that in such cases any proposal would require a report being considered by Planning and Regulation Committee in accordance with the Speed Limit Policy.

As can be seen from the table in Appendix B, by building in greater plus or minus miles per hour flexibility, provides the potential for a reduction in speed limit and therefore an increased number of reports being presented to Planning and Regulation Committee for consideration.

The number of reports taken to Committee at present on this particular matter is low. However if there is to be a change in the level this may potentially increase the number of requests and resulting workload.

As can be seen from Appendix B, out of the eight trial sites that have been investigated, three of those under the current policy could potentially be reported to Planning and Regulation Committee as a Borderline case. If the flexibility was relaxed further this would potentially only increase the number of reports by two. However it must be borne in mind that these sites have been identified through the consultation process and these may be the majority of sites with potential issues across the County.

Following the work of the Task and Finish Group and the consultation exercise it is clear that there is a desire to provide greater discretion/flexibility in relation to setting local speed limits in the County. With this in mind and from the information in Appendix B it would appear reasonable that a small relaxation in Borderline cases to +/- 2mph would not significantly be detrimental to the setting of appropriate levels of local speed limits.

This would also provide Planning and Regulation Committee with additional detailed information for sites of specific concern so that further flexibility in terms of debating and setting appropriate local speed limits is available.

2. Conclusion

It is proposed that any new policy will be subject to public consultation and this will be progressed once the new draft policy has been considered by this Committee.

Whilst any relaxation may result in an increase in workload it would appear from the data that this may not be too onerous of an issue.

It is difficult to place a cost on any additional workload. However it would be expected that any additional costs would be met from existing budgets and as stated above this may not have a significant impact.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Action Plan from recommendations of Speed Management Review in Lincolnshire
Appendix B	Table of mean speed readings from trial sites

5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Speed Management in Lincolnshire Final Report - June 2014	County Offices Newland Lincoln
Speed Limit Policy - July 2008	County Offices Newland Lincoln

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