

Cabinet

12 April 2022

20mph Speed Limits - Task & Finish Group Recommendations

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1. Supports the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on 20 mph speed limits as set out in 4.8.
2. Asks that all Members be informed of the options for using their Delegated Highways Budgets to fund speed limits and engineering measures designed to reduce speed, the potential availability of the Community Action Fund, the preferred approach of targeting specific locations, the criteria for 20 mph speed limits and what evidence is required to support a proposed 20 mph speed limit.
3. Asks the Strategic Director for Communities to monitor the use of Members' Delegated Highways Budgets for 20 mph limits and report back to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2023.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the County Council's meeting in July 2021, it was agreed that a short-term task and finish group (TFG) should be set up to: "to consider the evidence, cost, impact and/or benefit of 20mph speed limits in residential areas including schools and other sites of wider interest across Warwickshire as part of the Speed Management Strategy refresh and to report the outcome of this work to Cabinet".
- 1.2 A cross party task and finish group was subsequently established comprising 9 members which met on 4 occasions. The group looked into a blanket approach (a large area covered, e.g. a whole village or town), areas around schools (including roads leading to them) and very specific areas such as specific roads.
- 1.3 The Group concluded that a blanket approach would have little if any benefit and that consideration of 20 mph speed limits should be confined to specific locations. The Group also identified the possibility that Members could use and pool their Delegated Highways Budgets for road safety schemes, including the introduction of 20 mph speed limits where the relevant criteria were met and evidence demonstrated that the scheme would be cost

effective. The Group agreed a set of related recommendations which are set out in Section 4 below.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As this money has already been allocated in the budget, there would be no financial implications.
- 2.2 When the Community Action Fund is launched in Spring 2022, funding raised through this fund will be matched by the County Council. The funding for this has already been set aside.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The environmental impacts of 20 mph zones will vary according to the circumstances and would need to be factored into decision-making on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Lower speeds can reduce fuel consumption and air and noise pollution as well as encouraging the confidence of walkers and cyclists, but speed limits and associated engineering measures can increase acceleration and deceleration and potentially displace traffic to other roads. However, there is little evidence that a reduction in speed limits alone will lead to reduced speeds.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Group discussed how effective a 20mph limit would be with drivers, the effectiveness of 20mph limits already implemented in Warwickshire, the option of advisory 20mph limit signs outside schools and specific roads that would benefit most from 20mph limits, e.g. outside schools.
- 4.2 Two locations in Warwickshire were investigated for a blanket approach, i.e. the whole area being put into a 20mph limit. The findings were that this approach in a village (New Arley) would have no benefits and in a town (Kenilworth) it would have a small benefit. Full details of cost estimates are available on request. The village would cost £34,000 for a blanket approach and the town would cost £141,000-£167,000 depending on the extent of coverage.
- 4.3 Following the assessment of the blanket approach, it was agreed that blanket approaches were not effective when considering cost and impact and more focused targets should be reviewed instead, e.g. specific roads. However, there was a disagreement on the size of the radius that would be needed around schools to protect pupils travelling to and from school (some of the options for radiuses would cover whole towns).
- 4.4 The Group were informed that SatNav data is useful for identifying potential schemes, but all proposed schemes should have appropriate up to date traffic speed surveys to confirm average speeds.

- 4.5 The Group were made aware that they could use their delegated budgets for road safety engineering measures to reduce speeds, whether to support 20mph limits or independent of a reduction in the speed limit.
- 4.6 Based on experience of 20mph zones that have already been introduced elsewhere, the Group was informed by officers and Warwickshire police that 20mph limits were only effective if drivers were already abiding by the speed limit and the average speed in an area was 26-27mph in a 30mph zone. In the London Borough of Islington when the speed limit was reduced to 20mph, there was only a 0.5 mph speed reduction on average by drivers.
- 4.7 Before the Group debated and agreed its recommendations in July 2021, all elected members were given a presentation by the '20s plenty' campaign with their evidence for 20mph limits.
- 4.8 The final agreed recommendations of the group were approved by a 6-3 vote. These recommendations were that the Group:
- Informs all elected members that they can legitimately use their delegated budgets for road safety schemes in their division, including the implementation of 20mph limits where appropriate. This includes the ability for members to put their delegated budgets together for larger schemes that would cross divisions. Schemes are more likely to be appropriate for a 20mph limit where the current average speed across a road or group of roads is 24mph or less, based on existing sat nav data, and are within 1.6km (1 mile) of a school.
 - Recommend that all proposed road safety schemes, including a reduction in speed limits, are reviewed by the engineering teams first, to assess the effectiveness of the proposed scheme.
 - Allow the Road Safety team to notify elected members on how they could spend their delegated budgets on road safety measures, including 20mph limits when appropriate.
 - Recommend that the engineering teams monitor the success or otherwise of the use of Members' Delegated Budget for 20mph limits and report back to Communities O&S in February 2023.
 - Metrics for success should be clearly defined before implementation and include the level of accidents plus other readily available relevant data.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 If the recommendations are approved, officers will advise all Members of the options for using delegated budgets and the opportunities which will be offered by the Community Action Fund.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of deliberations of final meeting

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Councillors Clarke, Chilvers, D'Arcy and Fradgley