Briefing Note – Communities OSC 22 June 2022

Vehicle Activated Signs Policy

Background

Vehicle activated signs (VAS) are automated signs which illuminate at the approach of a vehicle to warn about speed or potentially hazardous road layouts, such as bends or junctions.

The County currently has close to 400 such signs, many of which are out of warranty, aging and constitute a substantial maintenance burden, to the extent that approximately 40% are currently non-operational.

Proposed draft policy

In order to ensure that VAS are installed only at locations where road safety benefits can reasonably be expected, a policy has been drawn up which contains robust criteria based around personal injury collisions, speeds, traffic volumes and local considerations such as crossing points and community facilities.

In addition, to reduce the County's maintenance burden, the policy will identify for removal VAS which have not produced the expected road safety improvements according to DfT research. These signs will only be removed when they stop working.

It is recognised that local communities may wish to retain existing signs which have been identified for removal under the proposed new policy. In these cases, parish or town councils may enter into an agreement with WCC to fund the ongoing maintenance of the sign and replacement if necessary.

The intended outcomes of this policy are to provide interested parties with clear guidance on where VAS may be considered for installation. This approach will have a threefold benefit: signs will only be installed at sites of real, not perceived, road safety risk; proliferation of VAS to a point where over-familiarity might reduce their impact will be more tightly controlled and the removal of 'redundant' VAS will reduce their financial burden, thereby allowing more appropriate targeting of resources.

Next steps

Subject to agreement at Cabinet in July, the policy will be implemented immediately and managed between Safety Engineering and Street Lighting.