

CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER

REPORT TO CABINET

Date of report: 6 January 2016

Report of: Maria Byrne, Head of Place Operations

Cabinet Member: Councillor Brian Clarke, Economic Development and Infrastructure

Title: 20 mph Speed Limits – Borough Wide Delivery

Is this a Key Decision? **Yes**

*One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards
If this is a key decision then the item must be on the current forward plan of key decisions

1 What is the report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the proposal to implement 20 mph speed limits in residential areas, with a particular focus of areas around schools, in order to reduce road traffic collisions, encourage more children to walk to school and reduce pollution.
- 1.2 This report outlines the recommended changes to the current policy regarding the implementation of 20 mph speed limits, together with recommendations about how the scheme will be funded.
- 1.3 This report does not seek to make any change to the policy relating to speed limits where the mean speed is over 24 mph in residential areas or where the mean speed is over 30 mph around schools. However, in practice the proposed changed policy will mean the widespread introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.

2 Recommendation

- (1) To approve the implementation of 20 mph limits on residential roads across the Borough where mean speeds on most roads are currently less than 24 mph and around schools where the mean speed is currently less than 30 mph.
- (2) To endorse the preparation and development of a report detailing which areas would benefit the most from the revised speed limit how the schemes would be prioritised and a work programme formulated for consultation.
- (3) Include £200,000 per year for four years within the Council's capital programme to be funded from LTP grant or other available external funding.

- (4) To approve appropriate delegated powers and authority to enable the Head of Service (Place Operations) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Infrastructure, to develop and implement the programme for roll out of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas and around schools.
- (5) To approve the change to consultation requirements, to streamline the process for introduction of 20 mph speed limits.

3 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 Average reduction in vehicle speed has the potential for delivering significant benefits, including reducing road traffic collisions, encouraging more children to walk to school, reduce pollution and improve air quality
- 3.2 It is expected 20 mph schemes will contribute to the reduction in injury collisions. Each road traffic collision that occurs on the highway network carries a cost to society. The Department for Transport provides cost values for the prevention of road traffic collisions and casualties. The average cost of a road traffic collision (all severities) is currently £99,846. This allows for pain, grief, suffering and healthcare costs, material damage, police costs, insurance administration and legal and court costs.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that local communities in general will have a positive feeling to lower speed limits in the area they live in. With 20 mph speed limits there tends to be a correlation with slower speeds that encourage active, sustainable and shared travel with more children likely to walk and cycle to school on their own. Parents are not tied to the school run and children have their freedom increased. Those people who have concerns about cycling become more likely to cycle than previously. With slower traffic, people are more likely to spend time in their street and to allow their children to play outside, thereby increasing their physical activity.

4 Report Details

- 4.1. 20 mph speed limits are being introduced more widely in several parts of the country and the council continues to receive representations and requests. Average reductions in vehicle speed have the potential for delivering significant benefits across the transportation, environmental and health agendas. It has been established that for every 1mph average speed reduction in an urban area a 6% reduction in collision frequency can be expected.
- 4.2. Further potential benefits of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas include quality of life and community benefits and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. There may also be environmental benefits, as detailed in paragraph 4.15 below.
- 4.3. Historically the areas considered most suitable for 20 mph speed limits / zones are

- 4.3.1. Residential roads with an existing speed limit of 30 mph where average vehicle speed is 24 mph or below. This will ensure the limit is self-enforcing.
- 4.3.2. Residential roads with a standard carriageway width and little or no off road parking which can be deemed suitable in such a way that parked cars sporadically often act as a way of slowing vehicles down.
- 4.3.3. Residential areas with schools in the vicinity and evidence of a significant amount of pedal cycle and pedestrian movement.
- 4.3.4. Areas where there is a history of recorded injury collisions where speed was considered a contributory factor and the incident involved a vulnerable road user.
- 4.3.5. Existing residential roads that already benefit from traffic calming and the mean speeds are below 24 mph. This is considered to be cost-effective as the limit or zone would not require any traffic calming measures, other than signing.
- 4.3.6. Residential roads that do not hinder bus operators and emergency service vehicles due to the placement of physical calming measures.
- 4.4. The Department for Transport (DfT) previous guidance stated that “successful 20mph speed limits should be generally self-enforcing. 20mph speed limits are unlikely to be complied with on roads where vehicle speeds are substantially higher than this and, unless such limits are accompanied by the introduction of traffic calming measures, police forces may find it difficult to routinely enforce the 20mph limit.”
- 4.5. When considering the appropriateness of a 20 mph speed limit, the area or length of road involved will also have some bearing. It is generally recommended that 20 mph speed limits (including 20 mph zones) should be imposed over areas consisting of several roads and not just an individual road. There may be exceptions to this and each area would need to be assessed on its own merits.
- 4.6. DfT therefore suggested that 20mph speed limits are only suitable where vehicle speeds are already low (mean speeds of 24mph or below), or where additional traffic calming measures are planned as part of the strategy.
- 4.7. In December 2009, DfT called for comments on a proposed revision of the guidance in respect of the use of 20mph zones and limits, encouraging local authorities over time to “introduce 20mph zones or limits into streets which are primarily residential in nature; and into towns or city streets where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas where these are not part of any major through route”.
- 4.8. The revision to the guidance (DfT Circular 01/2013) reiterates that successful 20mph zones and 20mph speed limits should be generally self-enforcing, and

should lead to average traffic speeds compliant with the speed limit. “To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed”. However, the Circular asks traffic authorities to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones over time in residential areas. Discussions are currently ongoing with Cheshire Constabulary with regards to the enforcement activity around 20 mph speed limits. However, the Force have previously stated that they will follow ACPO guidelines (now National Police Chief’s Council) in that they will provide support if a 20 mph scheme conforms to National guidance. It is anticipated that Cheshire Police will support 20 mph limits around school areas, however where mean speed are above 24 mph, additional speed reducing features will be required to ensure self-compliance.

- 4.9. Research into signed-only 20 mph speed limits shows that they generally only lead to small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. If the mean speed is already at or below 24mph on a road, introducing a 20mph speed limit through signing alone is likely to lead to general compliance with the new limit.
- 4.10. “20’s Plenty for Us” is a voluntary organisation that campaigns for the implementation of 20 mph as the default speed limit on residential roads in the UK. They consider “20mph to be the correct speed for residential and urban streets, unless it is otherwise decided that the higher limit is justified”.
- 4.11. The World Health Organisation has identified speed as the single most important contributor to road fatalities. Within the World Health Organisation report “Global Status report 2013, Supporting a decade of action”, they note that Pedestrians and cyclists are at risk of injury as a result of excessive vehicle speeds. They state that this vulnerability means particular attention needs to be paid to speed limits in areas with high concentrations of these road users, such as around schools or in residential neighbourhoods. Traffic calming measures that reduce vehicle speeds in these areas have proven effective in reducing road traffic injuries and have resulted in a cut in vehicle crashes with child pedestrians and cyclists by 67%.
- 4.12. Parents report that the perceptions of traffic-related dangers are one of the main reasons for them preventing their children from walking or cycling to school. The DfT in England has stated that promoting and increasing active and sustainable travel to school and other educational establishments is a core part of its active strategy. By encouraging more active travel by children, DfT believes that over the long-term there will be less need to encourage adults out of their cars and into walking and cycling, as this will already be a habitual behaviour established in childhood.
- 4.13. The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) was commissioned by the DfT to review the methodology being used in the United Kingdom to estimate vehicle pollution. Within the report the TRL noted that there is a range of pollutants that are emitted by vehicles, carbon monoxide (CO), volatile

organic compounds (VOCs), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) as well as a particulate matter (PM) and various unregulated gaseous pollutants.

- 4.14. The research also appreciated that there are many factors that affect vehicle emissions such as speed, acceleration, gearing and its selection, road gradients and the vehicle type and cargo weight.
- 4.15. Research has indicated that the targeted introduction of 20 mph limits on shorter roads with junctions and roundabouts in residential areas may improve air quality as limited acceleration up to 20 mph reduces fuel consumption; on local distributor roads, however, a 30 mph speed limit may be beneficial.
- 4.16. There are currently 146 primary schools (including both private and special) and 45 secondary schools (including colleges and university sites) within the Borough. Details relating to which of these areas with schools in them, will be suitable for 20 mph schemes, will be included within the programme for roll out of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas and around schools (as recommended in section 2.1 (iv)).

5. Council's current policy on setting local speed limits

- 5.1. A report went to the Executive in October 2013 to consider the report of the Chairman of the Localities Working Scrutiny Committee in relation to a scrutiny review to consider a New Guide on Setting Local Speed Limits. The report is attached at Appendix 1. The process as set out in the Appendix on how the Council wishes to roll out the speed limit guidance was endorsed in order that current speed limit requests can be assessed using this flexible approach and the Council can start to work with local communities.
- 5.2. The Council undertakes an assessment of any request for a change in speed limit and makes a decision on whether the request meets or partially meets the DfT guidance. If the initial assessment does not meet any sections of the guidance then the Council will provide a response with the reasons why and discuss any alternative measures.
- 5.3. It is essential that both Cheshire Police and the Council work closely together in determining or considering any changes to speed limits to ensure adequate enforcement.
- 5.4. Local communities are required to provide evidence of local support of more than 50% from households. Every household within an area, where a request has been made for the introduction of a 20mph scheme, currently receives an individual letter asking for their support. In order for the scheme to be agreed 50% of all households must respond and agree with the proposal (one signature per household is required). The current policy requires that 51% of respondents must agree to the proposal for the scheme to go ahead.

- 5.5 Local funding is currently required to facilitate any changes in speed limits. This can be provided by themselves, local Members' budgets or secure funding through Section 106 planning agreements. The actual amount required by local communities would depend how the speed limit change request meets the DfT guidance. This includes:
- Locations that fully meet DfT guidance (Circular 01/2013) - Communities are required to part-fund (50%) of scheme costs; and
 - Locations that partially meet DfT guidance (Circular 01/2013) - Communities are required to fully fund (100%) of scheme costs.
- 5.6. The maintenance and up-keep of any speed limit changes are provided by the Council through the Council's Highway Maintenance Budget. This includes for example the replacement of any sign face and/or post that has resulted in damage due to a vehicle hitting it or vandalism. In addition, any sign face that is obscured due to overhanging foliage will also be maintained by the Council.
- 5.7. Any changes or extending of a speed limit requires the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This involves a statutory process whereby interested parties are consulted and a draft TRO for the new speed limit is formally advertised for objection. If any objections are raised, these are considered by the Council through the powers of appropriate delegation before a final decision is taken. If the advertised TRO is approved, the Council will then implement the new speed limit.
- 5.8. In the last 3 years a total of ten 20mph limits have been introduced across the Borough (for information, the number of 20 mph limits introduced has increased since the PPP took place) with a further thirteen awaiting to be implemented, subject to evidence of local support and sufficient funding.
- 5.9. Road safety statistics, between 2011 and 2014, for Cheshire West and Chester are included in Appendix 2.

6. Recommend revisions to the 20 mph policy

- 6.1. Rather than communities having to find ways of funding 20 mph scheme, it is proposed that £200,000 per year is included within the capital programme for four years to fund the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas where the mean speed on most roads is below 24 mph and around schools where the mean speed is less than 30 mph.

This cost of implementing a 20 mph zone is approximately £1,500 per km. This includes the advertising and legal costs of the TRO process, all signing elements and a carriageway roundel at each entry to the zone. Within the highway network, there are approximately 500km's of residential roads. It is anticipated in Year 1 that we would be able to complete the area of Ellesmere Port for example or three smaller areas such as Frodsham, Neston and Winsford, should this be the priority.

- 6.2. The Council will no longer require the community to put forward recommendations of where they would like to see 20 mph schemes implemented. The Council will put together a schedule of schemes that are suitable for 20 mph zones (which meet DfT guidance), detailing which areas would benefit most from the revised speed limit, together with an implementation plan.
- 6.3. The Council will no longer require every household within an area where a 20 mph scheme is recommended for introduction, to receive an individual letter asking for their support. The Council will no longer require local communities to provide evidence of local support of more than 50% of households in order for the scheme to progress. As part of the new proposals, the Council will undertake an assessment of which areas are suitable for 20 mph schemes; they will then advertise these through the normal route of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This will simplify and streamline the process for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits and will provide residents with an opportunity to comment, support or object to the scheme. The Council will take reasonable steps to ensure there is awareness by the local community of the proposals and consult with all interested partners, e.g. Police, local Members, Town and Parish Councils, and all parties affected by the speed limit change, so as to ensure there is a clear understanding of any proposals within their area. In some areas, it may also be beneficially to leaflet residents, to inform them of the proposed changes and their ability to comment on the proposals as part of the TRO.

7 Input and Recommendations following the Economic Development and Infrastructure Policy and Performance Panel

- 7.1 The Economic Development and Infrastructure Policy and Performance panel met on 29 October 2015. Members considered a report and presentation on the implementation of 20mph speed limits in residential areas and around all schools within the Borough that have an existing 30 mph speed limit. The report updated Members on existing 20mph limits and the next steps to deliver 20 mph schemes in other residential areas. Questions were taken regarding the proposals and there was good participation, one contributor suggesting that the only way to make a lower speed limit work was to alter the behaviour of drivers.
- 7.2 The panel agreed to:
- 7.2.1 The introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas, as identified in the maps included within the PPP report, these maps are included in this report (Appendix 3).
- 7.2.2 Priority be given to the introduction of 20 mph speed limits or zones around all schools within the Borough that have a mean speed of less than 30 mph and areas where the mean speeds on most roads are below 24 mph on residential roads. As part of the preparation for roll out, speed limit assessments will be

undertaken and this will help to inform the priorities for the programme.

- 7.2.3 Current consultation policy is changed to use the statutory Traffic Regulation Order process in order to simplify and streamline the process of the introduction of 20 mph schemes. This was discussed again at the meeting on 7 December 2015 and it agreed the consultation would be changed to simplify and streamline the process, but extended to include consultation with all interested partners and all parties affected by the speed limit change in the area.

8 How does this Decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities?

Reduction in Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties
Improved Health and Wellbeing
Reduced Pollution and improved Air Quality

9 What will it cost?

- 9.1. It is proposed that £200,000 per year for four years is included within the capital programme, funded from LTP grant or other sources of external funding, such as S106 monies, where available. The funds allocated for this project are likely to increase the requirement for additional resources to provide ongoing maintenance, however it is expected that this will be funded within the existing Highways Revenue Budget.
- 9.2. It is anticipated that the replacement signs will be funded from the existing highway maintenance budget. Efficiencies gained from decluttering other areas in the borough should offset additional costs from maintaining the required signing for the speed limits.

10 What are the legal aspects?

- 10.1. Failure to follow the directions laid down by the Department for Transport and Traffic Signing Regulations could render schemes liable to legal challenge.
- 10.2. The changes to speed limits will be the subject of the statutory process required for Traffic Regulation Orders which will include public notice and formal consultation with statutory bodies such as the police.

11 What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 11.1 There is a risk that drivers may not comply with the revised speed limits. This can be mitigated by ensuring, that 20 mph limits are introduced in areas that are predominately self-enforcing, as detailed previously in this report.
- 11.2 There is a risk that if there is insufficient funding and resources to implement 20 mph speed limits on residential roads and around schools across the

Borough is likely to increase the risk to both pedestrian and cycle movement. This has can be mitigated by the recommendation in section 9.

12 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity issues?

- 12.1. The Council's approach to making any changes in local speed limits, in particularly of 20 mph and 30 mph roads will increase health benefits in terms of walking and cycling and encourage a shift towards healthier transport modes. These measures will also benefit disabled people, particularly, visual impaired and people with restricted mobility, including wheelchair users and older people.
- 12.2. The use of 20 mph speed limits has a neutral impact on the race, sexual orientation, religious /belief and other target groups. A reduction in average speed in residential areas is anticipated to reduce the frequency of road traffic collisions, benefitting all groups equally.
- 12.3. The use of 20 mph speed limits will specifically assist vulnerable road user groups, including young and elderly pedestrian and pedal cyclists. Reducing average speed through the use of 20 mph limits will therefore have a positive impact on these groups.
- 12.4. Reducing average speeds can also deliver benefits to quality of life, as well as encouraging healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling.

13 Are there any other options?

- 13.1 A decision could be taken to keep the current policy, but this relies on local communities putting forward proposals to implement 20 mph schemes, on local communities getting support of 50% or more households and relies on them sourcing funding for the scheme. The current policy will not enable the Council to implement and deliver a programme of 20 mph schemes in a timely or efficient way.

14 What are other Authorities doing?

- 14.1. Lancashire County Council is rolling out 247 20mph schemes over a three year period across residential areas and outside schools and linking these with educational and enforcement activities to bring about a change in the behaviour and attitudes of drivers.
- 14.2. Portsmouth has implemented "Total 20" on all its residential roads (May 2008).
- 14.3. Oxford has implemented "Total 20" on all its residential roads (Sep 2009).
- 14.4. Islington has implemented "Total 20" on all its residential roads (March 2010).
- 14.5. Newcastle is converting all its "advisory" speed limits on residential roads to mandatory 20 mph limits.

- 14.6. Bristol City Council is implementing 20mph speed limits on 2/3 of the city.
- 14.7. Warrington has implemented 20mph limits on 190 roads and is rolling this out across the whole town.
- 14.8. Southwark is now “infilling” all of its residential roads at 20 mph to create “total 20” for the borough.
- 14.9. Wirral has announced a 3 year program to set 20mph limits for all residential roads.
- 14.10. Edinburgh has announced a large 20mph limited area in the Southern part of the city.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at:

The 20 mph report that went to the Policy and Performance Panel - Economic Development and Infrastructure on Thursday, 29th October, 2015, can be accessed on the Cheshire West and Chester Council website at:

<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1000&MId=4805&Ver=4>

The Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 can be accessed online on the DfT's website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf

The Council's existing policy on Setting Local Speed Limits can be accessed online via the Council's own website at:

<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=443&MId=3911>

Detailed plans of A1 size identifying specific areas where 20 mph speed limits could be introduced including a plot of the existing road traffic collisions and location of schools can be viewed at the Council Office, Rivacre Business Centre, Mill Lane, Ellesmere Port, CH66 3TL.

The World Health Organisation, Global status report 2013, can be accessed online on the World Health Organisation's website at:

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/

