

COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	11 th September 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Speed Limit Review
REPORT NUMBER:	EP&I/12/182

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with the finalised review of speed limits on A & B class roads. This review was carried out in accordance with guidance ETTLD Circular No. 1/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits.
- 1.2 Incorporated into this report is the Notice of Motion by Councillor Farquharson which requested that a working group be established “to explore the possibility of changing the whole structure of traffic speed controls within the City of Aberdeen” at the Council meeting of 31st January 2012; the committee instructed Officers to report back with further information on:-
 - a. the blanket city wide 20 mph for residential uses implemented by Portsmouth Council;
 - b. traffic controls implemented by other comparable cities; and
 - c. the prosecution rates for motorists exceeding the existing 20 mph speed limit in the city.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the content of this report and that Officers have undertaken the review of speed limit in line with Scottish Government guidance.
2. Approve the outcomes of the speed limit review as detailed in the report.
 - a. A93 from Bielside to Milltimber possible reduction of speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
 - b. B997 from The Parkway to just north of Dubford Road, reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph
3. Instruct the appropriate officers to commence the necessary legal procedures of preliminary statutory consultation for the traffic regulation orders required as described in this report. If no

significant objections are received, then progress with the public advertisement and report the results to a future meeting of this Committee.

4. Agree that given the findings of the review no further action is required in regard to the Notice of Motion by ex-Councillor Farquharson.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of promoting the Traffic Regulation Orders related to the review of A & B class roads and providing the appropriate road signage and order is estimated at £4000. It is intended that this will be funded from the Capital outlay and Maintenance cost budget 2012/13.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no other implications.

5.0 BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Speed Limit Review

- 5.1.1 The Scottish government produced speed limit guidance in 2006 (Circular No 1/2006) on setting local speed limits. This guidance has placed an obligation for Road Authorities to undertake a review of speed limits for all A & B Class Roads within their area. The guidelines are not mandatory but simply outline the aspects to take into account when setting local speed limits, other than 20 mph limits, in both urban and rural areas. There is a separate Scottish Government 20 mph guidance (SEDD Circular 6/2001).
- 5.1.2 The setting of national speed limits for different road types is the responsibility of the UK Government and at local level speed limits are set by local authorities.
- 5.1.3 Aberdeen City's A & B class roads are principal, distributor and arterial roads that carry high volumes of business and leisure related traffic covering all vehicle types through the City. The majority of these roads have 30mph speed limit applied to them. (Appendix 1)
- 5.1.4 All new or existing speed limits should be appropriate to the road environment and, therefore, self-enforcing to the driver. This review and any subsequent additions or changes to the speed limits should enable drivers to perceive the need to travel at a correct and appropriate speed. This takes into account the local environment and the type of road characteristics appropriate to a particular speed limit
- 5.1.5 As noted above the setting of national limits for different road types, is the responsibility of the government. The three national speed limits are:
1. 30 mph speed limit on street lit roads
 2. the national speed limit of 60 mph on single carriageway roads
 3. the national speed limit of 70 mph on dual carriageways and motorways.
- 5.1.6 Local Road Authorities set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is different from the national speed limit. The table below provides an overview of typical local speed limits and general parameters.

Speed limit (mph)	Characteristics
20	In streets that are primarily residential and in other town or city streets where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas, where vehicle movement is not the primary function.

30	In other built up areas where vehicle movement is deemed more important, with development on both sides of the road.
40	On higher quality suburban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development, with few cyclists, pedestrians or equestrians. On roads with good width and layout, parking and waiting restrictions in operation, and buildings set back from the road. On roads that, wherever possible, cater for the needs of non-motorised users through segregation of road space, and have adequate footways and crossing places.
50	On dual carriageway ring or radial routes or bypasses that have become partially built up, with little or no roadside development

5.1.7 Key aspects taken into account when considering a speed limit change are :-

- road function and geometry;
- road environment;
- level of adjacent development;
- traffic flow;
- Accident data.

5.1.8 Guidance indicates principles that are used to determine appropriate speed limits on lengths of roads. The main aim of the guidance is to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds which reflects the function of the road and the impact on the local community. It indicates that mean (average) speed should be used to determine local speed limits as this reflects what the majority of drivers perceive as an appropriate speed to be driven on the road.

5.1.9 As part of the Speed Limit Review process, speed data has been collected at a number of sites throughout Aberdeen City, a sample of which can be found in Appendix 2. Surveys are undertaken regularly as a result of concerns expressed by Officers, residents and/or elected Members ensuring speed data is current and up to date.

5.1.10 Whilst a five yearly review is required under the current guidance, the assessment of local speed limits is a continual process that forms part of the day to day duties of the traffic management team, Speed limit amendments are implemented when considered appropriate, and following detailed investigations. Most recent speed limit changes have been introduced on the principal road network and notably the introduction of speed limit changes on the A956 Wellington Road Corridor and A944 at Kingswells. Similarly with the introduction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the development of strategic sites associated with land use in the Local Development Plan further assessments will be required

5.2 Current Review Findings and Outcome

- 5.2.1 This latest review, carried out in accordance with the assessment framework has confirmed that the existing speed limits are generally appropriate. However two sites have been identified that should be considered for a reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and are as follows:
- a. A93 from Bieldside to Milltimber possible reduction of speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
 - b. B997 from The Parkway to just north of Dubford Road, reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
- 5.2.3 As part of partnership working, Aberdeen City Council works closely with Grampian Police and NESAMP when considering any possible changes to local speed limits. Currently there are 6 fixed safety camera sites across Aberdeen City (*Appendix 3*) and the partnership continue to review sites where camera locations would deliver road safety benefits.

5.3 Conclusions

Speed limits on A & B roads are considered to be generally appropriate and acceptable; however, the review has highlighted two locations where adjustments to the current speed limit are recommended.

6.0 NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR FARQUHARSON

- 6.1. To the consideration of the Notice of Motion by Councillor Farquharson which requested that a working group be established “to explore the possibility of changing the whole structure of traffic speed controls within the City of Aberdeen” at the Council meeting on 31st January 2012; the committee instructed Officers to report back with further information on:-
- a. The blanket city wide 20 mph for residential uses implemented by Portsmouth Council;
 - b. Traffic controls implemented by other comparable cities; and
 - c. The prosecution rates for motorists exceeding the existing 20 mph speed limit in the city.
- 6.1.2 In 2002 the former Policy and Strategy Committee approved the adoption of the policy for the “Use of 20 mph Speed Limits”. The policy advises on Scottish Executive (now Government) guidance for the introduction of both mandatory and advisory 20 mph speed limits and sets out an assessment framework for the implementation of 20 mph speed limit / zones. A summary of the guidance notes can be found in Appendix 4.

6.2 Definitions

- 6.2.1 **20 mph zones** require traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps, chicanes) or repeater speed limit signing and/or roundel road markings at regular intervals, so that no point within a zone is more than 50 m from such a feature. In addition, the beginning and end of a zone is indicated by a terminal sign. Zones usually cover a number of roads.
- 6.2.2 **20 mph limits** are signed with terminal and at least one repeater sign, and do not require traffic calming. 20 mph limits are similar to other local speed limits and normally apply to individual or small numbers of roads but can be applied to larger areas.

6.3 The Blanket City Wide 20 mph for residential uses implemented by Portsmouth Council

- 6.3.1 Between 2006 and 2008 Portsmouth City Council implemented mandatory 20 mph speed limits across its residential and general road network covering 94% of the city's road length – 410km of the 438km network. In contrast to other towns and cities that have implemented 20 mph zones with traffic calming, Portsmouth opted for a low-cost approach by installing 20 mph limits supported by only speed limit signing. The implementation costs for this low cost option was in the order of £600,000.
- 6.3.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned a review by transport consultants Atkins to compare the three-year 'before' and two-year 'after' casualty and speed data.

The 20 mph Speed Limit scheme implementation by signs alone was introduced on Portsmouth City Councils residential roads where the average speeds were already low (24 mph or less) and therefore neither required the provision of additional traffic calming features nor enforcement. However, 20 mph signs were also provided on roads through residential areas with average speeds greater than 24 mph in order to provide consistency in the signing and road user perception.

In the review it was noted that vehicle speeds dropped by an average of 1.4mph at sites with average speeds less than or equal to 24mph before the 20 mph limit was implemented. On streets where average speeds exceeded 24mph before implementation, a bigger speed reduction of 6.3mph was recorded.

- 6.3.3 The Atkins report also noted that on many of these streets the reductions were not big enough to ensure that the 20 mph limit was self-enforcing. Nineteen of the monitored sites still had average speeds of between 24 and 29mph. The review acknowledged that the number of road accident casualties fell by 22% from 183 a year to 142 and compares with a 14% national drop in comparable areas. However the

consultants report concluded that “casualty benefits greater than the national trend have not been demonstrated”.

6.4 Traffic Controls implemented by other Comparable Cities.

6.4.1 Nationally of the 433 English local authorities 33 have committed to 20 mph as the default speed limit for all populated residential streets whilst in Scotland the approach within the large cities is to introduce area wide zones and individual sections of 20 mph limits i.e. outside schools where it was deemed appropriate and in line with guidance.

6.4.2 Of the 33 authorities adopting the wider speed limit only the scheme within Portsmouth has been independently assessed and findings reported.

6.5 Prosecution Rates for Motorists exceeding the existing 20 mph speed limit in Aberdeen City.

6.5.1 The following table indicates the numbers of actual prosecutions of persons speeding in a 20 mph zone in Aberdeen City.

	<i>Year Reported</i>						<i>Total</i>
	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>Jan-12</i>	
Male	12	3	2	8	12	17	54
Female	12	1	0	5	29	3	50
Total persons Prosecuted	24	4	2	13	41	20	104

Table 3

6.5.2 The table above, whilst providing information on the number of drivers who has been subject to reports to the Procurator Fiscal, does not provide meaningful data on the level of adherence to the speed limit. However it does indicate that enforcement is limited and reinforces the need for speed limits to be self enforcing and in keeping with the local road environment.

6.6 Discussion

6.6.1 The current national guidance and the adopted local speed limit policies provide clear guidance on the application and use of 20 mph speed limits within Aberdeen.

6.6.2 Aberdeen City, in line with the vast majority of local authorities nationally, have introduced 20 mph speed limits to meet local circumstances whether it is on an area wide basis, or to address specific speed related issues. The use of appropriate 20 mph limits in line with the current policy has been seen to improve road safety and reduce accidents and severity.

- 6.6.3 For the introduction of speed limits, it is necessary to ensure that the speed limit is appropriate to the local road to which it applies, is recognised by drivers, and where possible, is self enforcing. When taking a blanket speed limit approach there is significant potential to have inappropriate speed limits that do not reflect local conditions, are not readily understood by drivers and are difficult to enforce due to the limited police resource available.
- 6.6.4 Area wide traffic calming and speed limits have been utilised within Aberdeen for a number of years and the introduction of further schemes has been limited due to the funding available and the need to prioritise schemes against road safety benefits.
- 6.6.5 The DfT report findings on the Portsmouth scheme would suggest that limited benefits have been gained from the funds invested but did acknowledge some reduction in accidents.
- 6.6.6 A previous review of both the mandatory and advisory 20 mph speed limits within Aberdeen indicated that where the speed limits had been introduced in line with policy speed reductions had been achieved. However the speed reductions for the advisory 20 mph (20's Plenty) were not significant but are seen to assist in raising driver awareness. Where speed limits were introduced that did not comply with policy or guidance it was noted that a reduction in speeds was not achieved or were nominal. This experience reflects that of Portsmouth and that the introduction of speed limits which do not clearly meet general guidance do not achieve the road safety objectives anticipated from a lower speed limit.
- 6.6.7 As noted above, a significant proportion of the residential areas within Aberdeen, (see Appendix 5) are covered by mandatory or advisory 20 mph speed limits. If Aberdeen were to introduce a mandatory blanket 20 mph limit throughout all residential areas, the existing 20's Plenty scheme would require to be removed and replaced by mandatory signing.
- 6.6.8 The introduction of city wide 20 mph speed within all residential areas would demand a large staff resource in the assessment, promotion and implementation of such a scheme, and would take a number of years to deliver if funding could be identified and justified.
- 6.6.9 It has been suggested that some drivers have difficulty recognising speed limit differences (between mandatory and advisory) and variations within the city leading to confusion and speeding in low speed areas. The signing infrastructure that has been implemented for the both the mandatory and advisory speed limits complies with the necessary guidance and statutory requirements. The results of monitoring would indicate that when first introduced, speed limits are effective in reducing speeds and as would be expected, compliance is most effective when supported by physical traffic calming features.

However, in the case of advisory limits it is noted that after they have been in for an extended period that speeds tend to rise towards previous levels. From this it can be considered that drivers do recognise speed limits but will drive at speeds that they feel are appropriate for the road conditions or can be actively enforced.

6.6.10 In consideration it is felt that drivers are generally aware of speed limits and enforcement; and whilst a percentage of drivers choose to ignore 20 mph limits, the issue of driver perception and understanding is one that can be dealt with through driver education. In this context it is felt that a local media campaign to reinforce driver understanding of 20 mph limits would present an affordable outcome.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1.1 The existing guidance and policies adequately set out a framework for the assessment and implementation for speed limits.

7.1.2 Experience from Portsmouth would suggest that the introduction of a city wide speed limit would have limited benefits that would be difficult to justify in road safety and financial terms.

7.1.3 The progression of a city wide scheme to cover the remaining 50% of the residential road network would require significant funding and staff resource to take forward and implement, which at this time could not be justified and would be likely to impact on the delivery of other service areas.

7.1.4 The issue of driver understanding and perception could be reinforced through a local media campaign to highlight the need for compliance with speed limits.

8.0 IMPACT

The provision of Road Safety through the implementation of local speed limits meets the aspirations of the Community Plan and the Councils Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking statement.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

¹ Setting Local Speed Limits [Guidance for Local Authorities: ETLLD Circular 1/2006](#).

² SCOTS Additional Guidance: [ETLLD Circular No. 1/2006](#) Setting Local Speed Limits – Speed Limit Review.

³ DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/06 ([TAL 2/06](#)) Speed Assessment Framework

⁴ ACC Adopted Policy for 20 mph Speed Limits – Committee report 16 April 2002.

⁵ [DFT Interim Evaluation of Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limit](#)

⁶ [Parliament UK : Roads: Speed limits](#)

⁷ (20's plenty for us Sept 2011) [20's Plenty Uk](#)

⁸ "Total 20" whereby all residential roads are or will be set to a 20 mph limit

10.0 Consultees comments

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Convener: Councillor Barney Crockett

Vice Convener: Councillor Ramsay Milne

Local Members

Councillor Angela Taylor	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Gordon Townson	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Ian Yuill	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Muriel Jaffrey	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor John Reynolds, the Depute Provost	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Sandy Stuart	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Willie Young	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Barney Crockett, Leader of the Council	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Graeme Lawrence	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Neil MacGregor	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Gill Samarai	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Andrew May	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Jean Morrison MBE	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Nathan Morrison	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor John Corall	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Martin Greig	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Jennifer Stewart	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Ross Thomson	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor George Adam, the Lord Provost. Lord Provost	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Kirsty Blackman	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Lesley Dunbar	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Neil Cooney	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Andrew Finlayson	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Callum McCaig	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor David Cameron	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Steve Delaney	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Len Ironside CBE	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Marie Boulton, Depute Leader of the Council	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor M. Tauqeer Malik	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Aileen Malone	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Bill Cormie	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Fraser Forsyth	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Jenny Laing	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Scott Carle	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Jackie Dunbar	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Gordon Graham	Consulted 6 August 2012

Councillor Ross Grant	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Ramsay Milne	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Jim Noble	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Yvonne Allan	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Graham Dickson	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor Alan Donnelly	Consulted 6 August 2012
Councillor James Kiddie	Consulted 6 August 2012

Council Officers

Barry Jenkins, Head of Finance

Consulted 6 August 2012 – no comment

Jane MacEachran, City Solicitor, Continuous Improvement

Consulted 6 August 2012

Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive

Consulted 6 August 2012

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

Consulted 6 August 2012

Hugh Murdoch, Head of Service, Shelter and Environment

Consulted 6 August 2012

Margaret Bochel, Head of Planning & Infrastructure, Strategic Leadership –

consulted 6 August 2012 - agrees with recommendations

Mike Cheyne, Roads Manager

Consulted 6 August 2012 – comments incorporated into report.

Colin Walker, Community Safety Manager

Consulted 6 August 2012

Dave Young, Account Manager, Service, Design and Development

Consulted 6 August 2012

Laura Watson, Service Co-ordinator E P & I

Mark Masson, Committee Services

Allison Swanson, Committee Services

11.0 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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