

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	11 September 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Review of the National Speed Limit on the C128C Road between its junction with the A944 at Kingswells Roundabout and the existing 40mph restriction to the north of Cults
REPORT NUMBER	EPI/12/161

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides updated information to members of the Committee in relation to Councillor Boulton's motion regarding the implementation of a 40mph speed limit on the currently derestricted section of the C128C road between its junction with the A944 at Kingswells Roundabout and the existing 40mph restriction to the north of Cults.
- 1.2 Officers were instructed to report back to a future committee meeting (after a minimum period of one year) outlining the effect that the installation of the Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and the retexturing of the carriageway have made on vehicle speeds, accident numbers and severity on the C128C.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 1. Note the content of this report and the results of the follow up surveys / analysis that have been carried out since the road safety measures were installed last year.
 2. Agree that no further action should be taken with regard to the implementation of a lower speed limit.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Members should note that the cost of the previously installed VAS signs and the retexturing of the C128C amounted to £28,973.00 which was funded from the 2010/11 Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Non-Housing Capital Grant.
- 3.2 The implementation of a 40mph speed limit on the C128C between its junction with the A944 at Kingswells Roundabout and the existing 40mph limit north of Cults is estimated to cost in the region of £5,000.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Grampian Police are responsible for the enforcement of speed limits across the city. They have stated that they are in agreement with the recommendations outlined in the content of the original report and that the implementation of a reduced speed limit would not be effective without continual enforcement along the entire route. Grampian Police believe that the setting of a 40mph speed limit would set an unwelcome precedent on this type of route.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At its meeting on 15 March 2011 the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure committee considered a motion raised by Councillor Boulton "That consideration is given to reducing the speed limit on the road from Countesswells to Kingswells due to the high level of accidents".
- 5.2 At its meeting on 13 September 2011 the E P & I committee agreed to approve the recommendations and officers were instructed to report back to a future committee meeting (after a minimum period of one year) outlining the effect that the installation of the Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and the retexturing of the carriageway have made on vehicle speeds, accident numbers and severity on the C128C.
- 5.3 The C128C is a busy route to the west of Aberdeen linking Cults in the south to Kingswells in the north. The route is subject to a 30mph speed limit through the southern residential section from its junction with the A93 to a point approximately 45 metres northwest of Kirkbrae Avenue. From this point a 40mph speed limit "buffer zone" is in force for approximately 325m to the northwest. The remainder of the route north through the rural section to Kingswells Roundabout is derestricted (60 mph).

- 5.4 Accident analysis since the beginning of 2005 indicated there were four sites that were giving officers cause for concern along this route. From north to south these were: (see Appendix 1)
- Upper Kingshill bend (Site 1);
 - Bend south of Kingshill Cottage (Site 2);
 - Newton of Countesswells bend (Site 3);
 - Bend north of Foggieton Woods (Site 4).
- 5.5 In 2009/10 officers were concerned over the number of reported accidents at these sites. As a result, funding was identified within the 2010/11 Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Non-Housing Capital Budget for engineering measures to be implemented at each of the sites.
- 5.6 During March to May 2011 road safety engineering measures were undertaken at these four sites. The measures consisted of the retexturing of the carriageway, undertaken by a specialist contractor and this work improves the skid resistance of the carriageway surface. The treatment can extend the life of the existing surface by around five years whilst maintaining skid resistance values. Additionally, five vehicle activated warning signs have been installed along the route to warn motorists of a hazard ahead. These signs will be activated by vehicles travelling above a specified speed and advise motorists to slow down. The threshold speed for the signs has been set at between 35 and 40mph i.e. any vehicle travelling in excess of this speed triggers the warning sign.
- 5.7 Since the installation of the aforementioned measures a scan of collisions recorded by Grampian Police has been carried out and the indications are very positive with regard to the sections of road where the Vehicle Activated Signs are located and where the road surface at the bends was treated. For the 12 months (1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012) following implementation of the aforementioned measures there have been no collisions recorded by Grampian Police. This compares to 7 collisions (2 Slight Injury / 5 Damage) for the same period 2010/11, likewise 5 collisions (2 Slight / 3 Damage) 2009/10, and 4 collisions (2 Slight / 2 Damage) 2008/09.
- 5.8 Speed analysis was also carried out at the bend south of Kingshill Cottage (Site 2 in Appendix 1) prior to and after the introduction of the electronic vehicle activated 'bend ahead' warning sign that faces southbound drivers. In this respect there has been a modest reduction in vehicular speeds, with the 85%tile speed reducing from 43mph to 41mph. (The 85%tile speed being the speed at which 85% of the volume of vehicles recorded was travelling at or below.)

5.9 However, of more interest, when considering the speed analysis, is the percentage distribution of vehicles travelling at specific bands (5 mph bands from 31mph). The following table sets out the detail: -

Percentage distribution of southbound vehicles within specific speed bands approaching bend just south of Kingshill Cottage before and after installation of electronic vehicle activated warning sign (VAS)

Survey	Speed mph						
	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	>60
Jun 2012 (VAS installed)	29.63%	41.65%	14.67%	2.29%	0.38%	0.08%	0.04%
Sep 2011 (before VAS)	18.42%	44.43%	26.61%	5.34%	0.92%	0.17%	0.10%

This table indicates there has been a clear reduction in vehicular speeds as drivers pass the vehicle activated sign and approach the bend concerned. This reduction most pronounced in the 41 to 45 mph range, with a corresponding significant increase in the number of drivers travelling within the 31 to 35 mph range.

5.10 With regard to collisions on the remaining lengths of this route, over the 12 month period 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012, there were 2 recorded collisions. Both collisions resulted in damage, one the result of a vehicle colliding with a deer, the other the result of a car and transit van clipping wing mirrors. Excessive speed was not cited as a factor in either case.

5.11 As indicated in the previous report to Committee on the 13 September 2011, the Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 – “Setting Local Speed Limits” provides guidance to local authorities on the setting of speed limits. Paragraph 21 of this document states:-

“Speed limits are, however, only one element of speed management. They should be part of a package along with other measures to manage speeds which includes engineering and landscaping standards that respect the needs of all road users and raise the driver’s awareness of the environment, together with education, driver information, training and publicity. Within their overall network management responsibilities, these measures should enable traffic authorities to deliver speed limits and driven speeds that are safe and appropriate for the road and its surroundings, as well as help drivers to be more readily aware of the road environment and assess their own appropriate speeds at all times”.

Furthermore, paragraph 22 of the same document states:-

“If a speed limit is set in isolation, or is unrealistically low, it is likely to be ineffective and lead to disrespect for the speed limit.

As well as requiring significant, and avoidable, enforcement costs, this may also result in substantial numbers of drivers continuing to travel at unacceptable speeds, thus increasing the risk of collisions and injuries”.

Paragraph 41 goes on to state:-

“Speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, for example a single road junction or reduced forward visibility such as a bend, since speed limits are difficult to enforce over such a short length. Other measures such as warning signs, carriageway markings, junction improvements, superelevation of bends and new or improved street lighting are likely to be more effective”.

- 5.12 If a reduced speed limit were to be introduced on the C128C, the responsibility of enforcing traffic speeds lies with Grampian Police. They have stated that the implementation of a reduced speed limit would not be effective without supplementary traffic management measures along the entire route. Grampian Police believe that the setting of a 40mph speed limit would therefore set an unwelcome precedent on this type of route.
- 5.13 The issue of setting a precedent when considering a rural route of this nature is crucial when considering the wider road network. If a reduced speed limit was introduced on this route, the same criteria could be applied to adjacent roads that link to destinations such as Bielside and Brotherfield. Indeed, it would be the case that most rural type roads in the City could be governed by speed limits lower than the national speed limit. Thereafter, the practicalities of introducing additional signs in environmentally sensitive areas, as well as cost would become an issue, as speed limits between the national speed limit and 30mph (where a system of street lighting is in place) require the introduction of repeater signs at regular intervals.
- 5.14 The National Speed Limit must be considered in the context of the environment it generally applies. There are many similar roads to the C128C in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and of course nationwide, and the function of the National Speed Limit is to highlight the maximum speed a vehicle can be driven when the road layout allows such in a safe manner. So, on a narrow rural road a driver must adjust their vehicle speed accordingly and negotiate the road safely. Indeed, the situation is no different than that on a rural A Road, just because the National Speed Limit is 60mph a driver does not negotiate a tight bend at 60mph. Thus, in rural environments drivers have to exercise the utmost care and moderate their speed according to the road layout.
- 5.15 In conclusion, the method of installing measures at isolated hazards to mitigate vehicular collisions has proven effective. It is therefore recommended this committee takes no further action with regard to the possibility of changing the existing speed limit.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The content of the report meets with the local Community Plan objectives to continually improve road safety and maximize accessibility for pedestrians and all modes of transport.
- 6.2 The proposals are in line with the Council's Transportation Strategy to improve safety for all road users by continuing to reduce the number of casualties in traffic collisions.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Department for Transport: DfT Circular 01/2006 – "Setting Local Speed Limits", 8 August 2006.

Minute of Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting, 15 March 2011 (Item 9).

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1906&T=1>

"Notice of Motion from Councillor Boulton – "That consideration is given to reducing the speed limit on the road from Countesswells to Kingswells due to the high level of accident." Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee, 13 September 2012.

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1908&T=10>

Minute of Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting, 13 September 2011 (Item 17).

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1908&T=1>

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Doug Ritchie
Team Leader
Road Safety and Traffic Management Team
dritchie@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(01224) 538055

Graeme McKenzie
Technical Officer
Road Safety and Traffic Management Team
gmckenzie@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(01224) 538069

Consultees comments

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Convener: Councillor Barney Crockett

Vice Convener: Councillor Ramsay Milne

Local Members

Councillor Marie Boulton

Councillor M Tauqeer Malik

Councillor Aileen Malone

Council Officers

Barry Jenkins, Head of Finance – ‘No comments’

Jane MacEachran, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

Hugh Murdoch, Head of Asset Management and Operations

Margaret Bochel, Head of Planning and Sustainable Development

Mike Cheyne, General Manager Operations

Neil Carnegie, Community Safety Manager

Dave Young, Account Manager, Customer Service and Performance

Laura Watson, Corporate Administration Officer

Mark Masson, Committee Services Officer

