

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Name of Committee: Policy and Strategy

Date of Meeting: 16 April 2002

Title of Report: Policy for the Use of
20mph Speed Limits

Lead Officer: Corporate Director - City Development

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Consultation undertaken with:
Department of Finance & ICT
Department of Legal & Corporate Services
Grampian Police

Summary of Purpose of Report:

This report advises on the most recent Scottish Executive guidance for the introduction of both mandatory and advisory 20mph speed limits and asks the committee to consider proposals for the adoption of a policy for the introduction of 20mph speed limits on a citywide basis.

Linkages to Council Policy and Corporate Strategy:

This report complies with the Council's objectives in continuing to improve road safety, quality of life and the environment.

Recommendations:

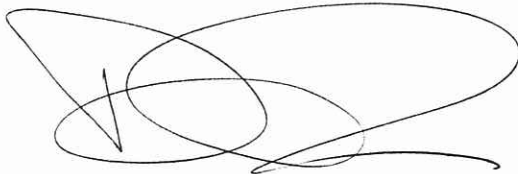
It is recommended that the committee

- i)* approve the draft policy contained within Appendix 2 to this report.
- ii)* instruct the appropriate officials to prepare a phased priority programme for the introduction of 20mph schemes, with detailed costs for implementation and report back to the Environment & Infrastructure committee.
- iii)* refer the minute of this Committee, and the report to the Environment & Infrastructure Committee to a future Resources Management Committee with the recommendation that a budget allocation be made for the introduction of 20mph speed limits in line with the phased priority programme.

Resource Management Implications:

- People : The additional work in preparing a priority programme can be undertaken by existing staff but will require other traffic management and road safety projects to be phased accordingly.
- Finance : No budget allowance has been made for the introduction of 20mph speed limit schemes and funding will be required should the policy and priority programme be approved .
- Systems & Technology : None.
- Property : None.
- Other : None.

Other Implications : None.



SIGNED (Lead Officer)

Date:

4/4/02.

Main Considerations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A report on the most recent guidance on the introduction of 20mph speed limits was considered at the Environment and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on the 6th November 2001. The Committee resolved to recommend to the Policy and Strategy Committee that it be uppermost in that Committees mind that the Environment and Infrastructure Committee wished to see policies for Aberdeen that would allow satisfactorily reconciliation of public aspiration and professional caution.

2. 20 mph Speed Limits Application and Use

- 2.1 In developing a policy for Aberdeen it is necessary that the policy duly recognises and embraces national guidance to ensure that the speed management measures are used as both an effective and practical traffic management tool. In July 2001 the Scottish Executive published the circular 6/2001 which provides advice and guidance on the introduction of 20mph speed limits a detailed summary of which is given in appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 A recent review by the DETR regarding the application of speed management was published in the document entitled ' New Directions in Speed Management - A Review of policy '. The findings provide clear statistical information on traffic speed and defines the links between vehicle speeds and the severity of accidents. The findings of this report reinforce the need to apply speed limits sensibly and in a manner that will effectively manage the road network and be appropriate to the location and the function of the road.
- 2.3 This most recent guidance clearly indicates that care must be taken with the introduction of mandatory and advisory speed limits and that a hierarchical approach to the road network should be taken. In this context the introduction of 20mph speed limits would not be considered for principal and distributor roads. However consideration may be given for the introduction of a 20mph limit on a local distributor road which has significant community facilities fronting the road with high pedestrian access and crossing movements. In such situations additional traffic calming features would be seen as necessary to support the reduced speed limit and create an area perceived to have a change of environment and pedestrian activity.

- 2.4 The above discussions relate directly to the application of speed limits to existing roads. However the application of lower speed limits should also be considered in the context of this policy for new developments where roads are to be adopted. The introduction of the lower speed limit as part of the development proposal will remove the need to reconsider these matters at a later date together with the possible costs that would inevitably fall to the council as Roads Authority. In this respect it is proposed that where new development roads are to be offered for adoption, through the construction consent process, the opportunity should be taken to incorporate a 20mph speed limit on all traffic calmed roads and where appropriate in the vicinity of local community facilities. Should the proposed policy be approved it will be necessary for the Council's 'Guidelines and Specification for Roads within Residential and Industrial Areas' to be amended.
- 2.5 For new development it will also be necessary for the principal of a 20mph speed limit be established during the planning process when an individual application is lodged for consideration. In this respect it would be appropriate for specific planning conditions and/or legal agreement to be applied should any planning approval be given. This initiative would save guard the council's interests in both road safety and financial terms.
- 2.6 For 20mph limits to be incorporated in new development it would be necessary for this council to promote the necessary Traffic Regulation Order with the cost of the promotion of the order being met by the developer. The present cost for the promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order is £1500 and excludes the implementation costs which would also be seen as the responsibility of the developer and be secured through any planning approval.
- 2.6 Appendix 2 to this report summarises the proposed policy for both the existing road network and new development and is recommended for adoption with immediate effect.

Scheme Prioritisation

- 3.1 As members will be aware considerable pressure has been exerted for the implementation of 20 mph speed limits at various locations city wide and has to date been resisted prior to a policy and strategic approach being adopted. It is suggested that with the adoption of a policy for the use of 20mph speed limits it is important that the schemes be assessed in terms of city-wide priority with those areas of greatest need being targeted first for implementation.

- 3.2 It is therefore proposed that a priority programme be established based on traffic speed and volume, cost of implementation and most importantly the accident record for the location under consideration. The priority programme would be similar to that adopted for traffic calming schemes and be developed in line with the area traffic management review process.
- 3.3 However a further consideration in the development of any programme is the assessment and inclusion of community facilities and the local population base which is thought to be an integral part of the assessment process. In this respect a weighting will be given to those locations or areas with additional facilities serving the larger community and should include sheltered housing, schools etc. However the greatest level of importance should be given to addressing any existing accident record.
- 3.4 An initial programme can be developed from previous requests and problems highlighted through the area traffic management reviews and extended as the area review programme is carried forward. However the assessment of each location will be dependant on both surveys and preliminary design work being carried out and will take both time and staff resource to complete on a city wide basis. It is therefore suggested that a programme of schemes be the subject of a future report to the appropriate committee with a target time scale of approximately 3 months time.

4 Scheme Costs

- 4.1 In the development and adoption of a policy of this nature it is prudent that the scale of the cost of provision and future maintenance be taken into account and that where necessary an allowance be made within council budgets to allow schemes to progress in a structured and strategic manner.
- 4.2 The works cost for the implementation of a singular speed limit in a typical urban situation is in the order of £2500 and added to this are those necessary costs for the promotion of the Traffic Regulation Order, which has been estimated at £1500.
- 4.3 However for many residential areas the application of a 20mph speed limit whether mandatory or advisory would ideally be over larger areas with a zone concept .The typical cost for the implementation of a 20 mph zone within a residential area covering on average some ten streets has been estimated at approximately £ 9000 .

- 4.4 In the larger concept the application of 20mph limits within existing residential areas on a city wide basis would cost in the order of £1.2m all which emphasises the need to prioritise any proposed schemes accordingly and in line with road safety guidelines and gradually roll out a programme of implementation over a number of years .
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that should this committee approve the attached policy on the introduction of 20mph limits that this report be referred to both the Environmental & Infrastructure Committee and the Resources Management Committee with the recommendation that consideration be given to the funding and budgetary arrangements required for the strategic introduction of a 20mph speed limit policy city wide
- 4.6 As with all new works long term maintenance will be necessary and an additional allowance will require to be made within future revenue budgets to accommodate the additional burdens which could be anticipated if the policy is approved and then rolled out city wide. Maintenance requirements will include cleaning of signs, lighting, sign replacement and the general refurbishment of scheme signs.

APPENDIX 1

GUIDANCE ON MANDATORY AND ADVISORY SPEED LIMITS

1. 20 mph Zones

- 1.1 **The guidance on the introduction of 20mph zones (mandatory limits) has not changed in that speed reducing features are still necessary to make the scheme self enforcing.** These speed reducing features must comply with legislation and specifications for traffic calming features.
- 1.2 The establishment of the zone should be consistent with the authority's road safety objectives as set out in it's Road Safety Plan.
- 1.3 The installation of engineering measures such as traffic calming will have reduced average speeds to the order of 20mph or less.
- 1.4 **20mph zones are unlikely to be appropriate on the approaches to fire or ambulance stations or hospitals,** where the casualty reductions to be expected from lower speed may be outweighed by the delay to emergency service vehicles.
- 1.5 Entrances to 20mph zones should normally be at junctions and designed in such a way as to give the appearance of passing through a gateway to a more restricted area.
- 1.6 The engineering measures used should be of standard design and will not create hazards for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly those people with a visual or mobility impairment.
- 1.7 Consultation will follow normal statutory requirements for the promotion of speed limit traffic regulation orders, which includes the police and other emergency services as well as road user representative bodies. **It is vital when promoting such orders to give full weight to the view expressed by the police regarding enforcement.** There are also statutory consultation requirements for the promotion of associated traffic calming measures. Both legislative procedures enable residents, members of the public, local community councils and other bodies as may be affected the opportunity for comment.

2. Mandatory 20 mph Speed Limits

- 2.1 Local Authorities may establish mandatory 20mph speed limits with no supporting speed reducing features but these should not be introduced where there is no realistic expectation that they will achieve the required decrease in traffic speeds or where the police are unable to give an undertaking to provide an effective level of enforcement.
- 2.2 Close consultation with the police should be undertaken at an early stage when considering the introduction of mandatory 20mph speed limits as unrealistic and unenforceable limits will not bring about the expected road safety benefits.
- 2.3 **Certain roads or groupings of roads where the 85%ile speed is only a little over 20mph – no higher than 24mph is recommended - may be suitable for signs only mandatory 20mph speed limits.** A small reduction in speed could thereafter be possible.

NB: The 85%ile speed of traffic is the speed below which 85% of vehicles travel.

- 2.4 **In roads where 85%ile speed are higher than 24mph, the signs only mandatory 20mph speed limits are not recommended** as the desired speed reduction is unlikely. In these circumstances the installation of speed reducing features should be considered first.

3 Advisory 20 mph Speed Limits

- 3.1 **Residential areas that are self-enclosed in nature, small groups of streets, whole housing estates or readily identifiable sectors of a community used mainly by local residents and with little or no through traffic may be considered suitable for new advisory 20mph speed limits.** In general, roads which carry through traffic, bus routes or roads which have a significant volume of non-residential traffic are unlikely to be suitable because of the difficulty in obtaining widespread public support.
- 3.2 Advisory 20mph speed limits are most likely to be effective in areas where 85%ile speeds are in the range of 25-30mph. **Where the 85%ile speeds are higher than 30mph, advisory 20mph speed limits are not considered appropriate** and in these circumstances traffic calming measures are recommended to support the advisory speed limit.

- 3.3 Drivers should not travel for more than 600m before reaching the end of the 20mph speed limit. Where a road is straight for more than 400m and has no natural traffic calming features, consideration should be given to reinforcing the advisory speed limit by the installation of low cost traffic calming measures.
- 3.4 Although the pilot schemes indicated an overall reduction in the number and severity of accidents, **advisory 20mph speed limits are unlikely to be appropriate in areas with a significant accident history. Advisory speed limits should therefore not be used in isolation in such areas** and should be considered as one element in an overall package of more comprehensive remedial measures
- 3.5 By their nature, advisory speed limits cannot be enforced and the police cannot take action to enforce compliance. The support of local residents is therefore crucial to the success of an advisory 20mph speed limit. **It is strongly recommended that extensive consultation is undertaken with local residents** at the earliest opportunity in the promotion of such a scheme with minimum consultation requirements of every household within the area proposed for an advisory 20mph scheme circulated with information and asked for their views. Authorities are recommended to consider leaflet drops, public meetings and focus groups in addition to media features and publicity. Publicity should be carried out both before and immediately after the introduction of the scheme, with specific targeting to schools ie teachers, pupils and their parents.

Although not a statutory requirement, consultation with the police, fire and ambulance services is also recommended.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation of Advisory 20mph Speed Limits

- 4.1 Advisory 20mph speed limits should be monitored and evaluated after at least 12 months and not more than 3 years, with speeds and accidents being taken into account. On the basis of the information obtained, the following may be considered.
- if the advisory 20mph speed limit has reduced the 85%ile speed to 24mph or less, convert to a mandatory 20mph speed limit;
 - retain advisory 20mph speed limit with or without the addition of further speed reducing features if speeds remain in the range 25-30mph;
 - remove the advisory 20mph speed limit if considered to have no impact or if subsequently considered unnecessary.

Appendix 2 – Policy for the Introduction of 20mph Limits

General

Where existing traffic speed exceeds 30mph the introduction of a 20mph speed limit both mandatory and advisory is not considered appropriate

Advisory 20mph speed limits are considered to be inappropriate in areas where the enforceable speed limit exceeds 30mph.

Mandatory and advisory 20mph speed limits are only considered appropriate for use in residential roads and general access roads. The introduction of 20mph speed limits will be considered for local distributor roads in exceptional circumstances (eg. In the location of community facilities, schools, local shopping areas etc) where supported by additional traffic calming/ management measures.

20mph zones (mandatory limit)

Existing traffic speeds must be in the order of 20mph before the introduction of a mandatory 20mph limit is considered appropriate.

The proposed zone must be part of the road safety objectives set out in the Road Safety Plan.

All parts of the zone must be within 1 kilometre of the zone boundary roads.

Zone entrances should be at junctions and have a gateway appearance. (ie. leading to a restricted or 'special' area)

Mandatory 20mph Speed Limits

The existing 85th percentile speed of traffic should not exceed 24mph

For use principally in residential areas and should only be introduced on local distributor roads in exceptional circumstances and when supported by appropriate traffic management /calming measures.

Where the existing 85th percentile speed of traffic exceeds 24mph the introduction of the lower speed limit may be considered if supported by the use of appropriate speed reducing and traffic calming measures.

Where traffic calming is to be introduced in existing residential areas a 20mph speed limit should also be introduced to support road safety initiatives.

Advisory 20mph Speed Limits

May be introduced where the existing 85th percentile speed of traffic lies between 25 and 30mph.

Where an advisory limit is introduced the site shall be monitored in the first three years and should the 85th percentile speed be found to be less than 24mph consideration can then be given to the introduction of a mandatory 20mph limit.

New Development

All new residential developments with prospectively maintainable public roads and complying with the above requirements will, where reasonably practicable be subject to the promotion and implementation of 20mph speed limits. The cost of the promotion and implementation of the speed limits to be met by the developer.

NB: The 85th percentile speed of traffic is the speed below which 85% of vehicles travel.