

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing, and Infrastructure
DATE	27 October 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Rural Roads - Speed Limits
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/284
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report responds to item 25 of the Communities Housing and Infrastructure (CH&I) meeting of 28 October 2014, where officers submitted report number [CHI/14/014](#) "C127 Blacktop Road – Flashing speed limit signs – Feasibility of installing VMS signs on the C127C Blacktop Road (East to West bound)

The Convener moved the recommendations contained in the report with additional recommendation to

- a) Review the situation on the road in 12 months' time.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report and that Officers have undertaken the review/assessment in line with Scottish Government and Department for Transport guidance.
- 2.2 Agree that no further action be taken and that a review of all routes in the area will be carried out after the opening of the AWPR in 2018.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Police Scotland maintain the view that they are not supportive of a reduction in speed limit being applied to this route. This stance is being taken on the basis of only 3 injury collisions between 2010 and 2011, none of which had a contributory factor of inappropriate speed and no further recorded injury collisions to date. Relatively low recorded speeds, of under 50 mph, were obtained during surveys (Appendix 1) and Police Scotland do not believe that the accident record and low recorded speeds supports the need for enforcement nor the need for a reduction in the speed limit. Police Scotland have intimated they would have difficulty in estimating costs for any enforcement and decline to provide estimates for roads on which they feel reduced speed limits are not required.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Amendment - Councillor Yuill

At the Communities Housing and Infrastructure (CH&I) meeting of 28 October 2014, officers submitted report number [CHI/14/014](#) "C127 Blacktop Road – Flashing speed limit signs – Feasibility of installing VMS signs on the C127C Blacktop Road (East to West bound). To report back to committee in 12 months time.

6.0 ROUTE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The unclassified single carriageway C127C Blacktop Road lies west of Aberdeen City. It is 5.5 metres in width with narrow grass verges along its length and no street lighting present. C127C by nature is a typical rural road with a winding alignment and occasional sharp bends with no significant settlements along the route. This defines its national speed limit of 60 mph for its length to the adjoining Aberdeenshire boundary terminating at the junction with the B979 Peterculter Road.
- 6.2 The adjacent road network is rural in nature with a national speed limit of 60 mph applied to them with the exception of Kingswells to Cults road of which the recently implemented 40 mph speed limit terminates at the junction with Blacktop Road, resuming the national speed limit east and westbound.
- 6.3 Recent surveys have shown the majority of drivers are travelling below, sometime significantly below, the speed limit due to the characteristics of the road. This is especially evident on the surveyed routes, as shown in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 The C127C is heavily trafficked on weekdays during peak times with significant volumes of commuter traffic travelling to/from the city centre.

However, it is expected that the volume of commuter traffic will be reduced by approximately 75% upon completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) in 2018.

7.0 SPEED LIMIT ASSESSMENT/SETTING NATIONAL SPEED LIMITS

7.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits states in its Key Points; “speed limits should be evidenced and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.”

7.2 The vast majority of the Aberdeen City rural road network, including Class C and Unclassified roads, are subject to the national speed limit of 60 mph on single carriageway roads, and as surveys have shown, the majority of drivers do not reach or exceed the speed limit on many of these roads because it is often difficult to do so and this is especially evident on the Blacktop Road with its geometric characteristics.

8.0 RURAL SPEED MANAGEMENT

8.1 The National Speed Limit is considered in the context of the environment in which it generally applies. Appendix 1 shows the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of the total traffic is travelling at or below) and the mean speeds to be in the region of 10-23 mph below the existing speed limits on the Blacktop Road.

8.2 C127C is primarily a through traffic route with a local access function that has been considered in the assessment and weighted in line with the nature and function of the road. Setting of a speed limit takes into account if there are any substantial roadside development and whether the road forms part of a recognised route for vulnerable road users, including whether there is a footway.

8.3 Speed limit change will therefore be unlikely to impact significantly on the speed at which vehicles are travelling. As indicated in the DfT Circular 01/2006, setting a speed limit in isolation is likely to be ineffective and may cause driver confusion whilst joining the road network from the adjacent national speed limit routes.

9.0 ACCIDENT DATA

9.1 Table 1 below shows causation factor results of the accident analysis carried out on Blacktop Road over the 5 year period 2010 to 2014 and data available to date in 2015. There were a total number of 3 road traffic collisions of which there were 1 serious and 2 slight injury accidents between 2010 and 2012 and no recorded child injury accidents. There were no personal injury accidents along the route from 2013 to date and 2 reported damage only road traffic collisions neither of which speed was a factor.

Table 1

ACCIDENT CAUSATION FACTOR	No of Accidents	Type of Accident
Disobeyed double white line	1	Slight Injury
Vehicle Blind Spot	1	Slight Injury
Dazzling Sun	1	Serious Injury

10.0 SPEED ASSESSMENT

10.1 Speeds were taken at locations where it was judged they would potentially be greatest. As shown in Appendix 1, these indicate an average speed used by drivers for winding sections of road of 38mph to 43mph and 50mph for straighter sections; indicating that the majority of drivers do adhere to the geometry and conditions of the road.

11.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The DfT Circular 02/2013 paragraph 19 quotes:
“Unless a speed limit is set with support from the local community, the Police and other local services, with supporting education, and with consideration of whether engineering measures are necessary to reduce speeds; or if it is set unrealistically low for the particular road function and condition, it may be ineffective and drivers may not comply with the speed limit.”

11.2 It is intended that any new and existing speed limits should be ‘self-enforcing’. The review and speed limit strategy should enable drivers to perceive the need to travel at a correct and appropriate speed, leading to a situation where little or no formal enforcement is required.

12.0 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

12.1 Within the 2013/14 road safety programme work was carried out to retexture the road surface at a series of bends and approaches on the C127 Blacktop Road. The reduction in road traffic collisions post retexturing indicates the improved skid resistance, particularly in wet conditions, has made a contribution to the reduction in collisions at

isolated locations along the route. There have been no recorded injury accidents on the Blacktop Road since February 2011.

- 12.2 Road safety improvements for Blacktop Road have been identified and programmed from the 2015/16 CWSS budget to implement additional, and refresh the existing 'SLOW' markings on the carriageway at the approach to bends, the installation of new bend warning signs, and improve visibility to the existing signs which are currently masked by overgrowth.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 13.1 Speeds taken at various points on Blacktop Road are consistent with the speed limit and reflect the function of the road and its environment.
- 13.2 The 5 year collision history for the route is extremely low (1 serious and 2 slight injury road traffic collisions) neither of which are speed related. There have been no recorded injury accidents after February 2011.
- 13.3 The construction of the AWPR will change the dynamic on this route with an anticipated 75% of the current traffic flow migrating to the AWPR upon its opening in 2018.
- 13.4 Consideration and investigation has shown the national speed limit of 60mph at the Blacktop Road is appropriate for the route. A substantial reduction in a speed limit should be evidence led with supportive findings of a speed and road traffic collision history together with support from Police Scotland. A 30 mph speed limit at Blacktop Road is inappropriate and may cause driver confusion with alternating speed limits on connecting routes and extremely unlikely to alter the current speed at which vehicles travel.

14. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

As the recommendation is to take no further action there is no impact on current customer experience.

Improving Staff Experience – Not applicable.

Improving our use of Resources – Not applicable.

Corporate - The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a “sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all”. With respect to the delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of Aberdeen – *The Smarter City*: “We will develop, maintain and promote road, rail, ferry and air links from the city to the UK and the rest of the world. We will encourage cycling and

walking”, and “We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.”

Public –

This report will be of interest to the residents/proprietors/businesses within the Blacktop Road.

15. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Where recommendations are not accepted with regard to this proposal there is the risk road safety levels and traffic management could be compromised thereby resulting in on-going public concern, negative media reporting, and reputational damage. Conversely, proposals with regard to traffic management measures can often prove contentious and it is therefore possible some of these proposals could be subject to negative feedback/comments. In this respect, concerned parties would be provided with a thorough rationale as to the necessity for the traffic management proposal concerned.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Agenda for Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on Tuesday, 28th October, 2014, 2.00 pm \(item 25\)](#)

[Minute of Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting, 22 January 2013 \(Item4\).](#)

[Minute of Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting 15 March 2011 \(Item 9\)](#)

[Minute of Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting 15 March 2011 \(item17\)](#)

[Minute of Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting 15 March 2011 \(Item 27\)](#)

[Setting Local Speed Limits](#)

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

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

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Rural Road Environment Policy Paper: August 2010

17. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX 1

Route	Description	Existing Speed Limit	85th%ile speed taken on straight (automatic traffic counter)		MEAN speed taken on straight (automatic traffic counter)		Speed taken on bends (Hand held radar)	Average Daily Vehicle Flow	Length (km)	Years Analysed 2010 - 2014	
			N/B or E/B	S/B or W/B	N/B or E/B	S/B or W/B				Serious Injury Accidents	Slight Injury Accident
1	C127 Blacktop Road	60	43	40	36	31	38	1,500	4.0	1	2



