

Agenda Item No. 4(b)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**31 January 2019**

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PETITION – B6052 CHESTERFIELD ROAD, ECKINGTON – CONCERNS  
REGARDING SPEED AND SAFETY**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To inform the Cabinet Member of a petition reporting a speeding and safety issue on the B6052 Chesterfield Road, Eckington, requesting a lowered speed limit of 20mph, the introduction of a weight limit and the erection of a vehicular activated sign.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

**Background**

At the meeting on 20 December 2018, the Cabinet Member acknowledged receipt of a petition (Minute No. 100/18 refers). It contained 40 signatures with a covering letter from Eckington Parish Council requesting the installation a vehicular activated speed sign, together with the introduction of a lowered speed limit of 20mph and the application of a weight limit to Chesterfield Road.

The B6052 Chesterfield Road is a 'B' classified route linking Whittington Moor roundabout in Chesterfield with the B6056 in Eckington, which forms part of Derbyshire's strategic highway network. A location plan is attached (Appendix 1). On leaving New Whittington, Chesterfield, the speed of the road increases from 30mph to 50mph and is of a predominantly rural aspect until it reaches the outskirts of Eckington where it reduces to 40mph speed limit before the speed reduces again to 30mph prior to the main urban conurbation of Eckington.

The 30mph speed signage is also accompanied by a speed limit carriageway roundel and 'dragon's teeth' road markings. Chesterfield Road also has a pedestrian crossing warning sign erected at one of the entrances to Birk Hill Infant and Nursery School. There is no School Crossing Patrol (SCP) covering the Chesterfield Road site. The site does not meet the current criteria for an SCP service.

### **Officer Comment**

Signed only 20mph schemes throughout the Country focus upon the less strategic roads that are more residential in nature. It is not appropriate to place them on more strategic roads where traffic is generally encouraged to go in preference to other less desirable or suitable routes. The Traffic Management Act 2004 puts a responsibility on all highway authorities to keep traffic flowing, as well as maintaining road safety.

The County Council has a Speed Management Plan which lists the criteria that must be met before vehicle activated signs are provided on the public highway (Appendix 2). The concept being that signs of this type should be used sparingly to ensure that the ones that are provided that meet the agreed collision criteria remain effective. If there was a more widespread usage of such signs, then drivers would see them as commonplace and this could generally dilute their effectiveness. Officers have analysed the reported injury collision database and can confirm that the injury collision history for this length of road is excellent with no incidents having occurred in the most recent three year period available.

Officers carried out speed readings in November 2018 and these indicated that there is also generally good compliance with the speed limit. The readings were taken outside No.35 Chesterfield Road and showed that in the north-east direction, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 32mph, and the south-west bound direction, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 34mph. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile reading is the speed of the 85<sup>th</sup> vehicle out of 100 surveyed when their speeds assorted from the lowest to the highest, both within the Association Chief Police Officer's guidelines for enforcement, which is the speed limit plus 10% plus 2mph. Concerns regarding excessive vehicle speed should be made directly to the police as they are the only body that can enforce the speed limit.

The information above means that the current criteria required for the installation of a vehicular activated sign has not been met.

Chesterfield Road is a 'B' classified road and forms part of a strategic route linking communities together and having an important strategic function. It is generally of a very high quality and is intended to carry large volumes of all types of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, therefore, a weight limit cannot be recommended to be applied to this road.

For the above reasons, it is recommended that this petition be rejected.

### **Local Member Comment**

Councillor Brian Ridgeway and Councillor Diane Charles have been consulted and have no further comment.

- (3) **Financial Considerations** There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

### **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property, social value and transport considerations.

- (4) **Key Decision** No.

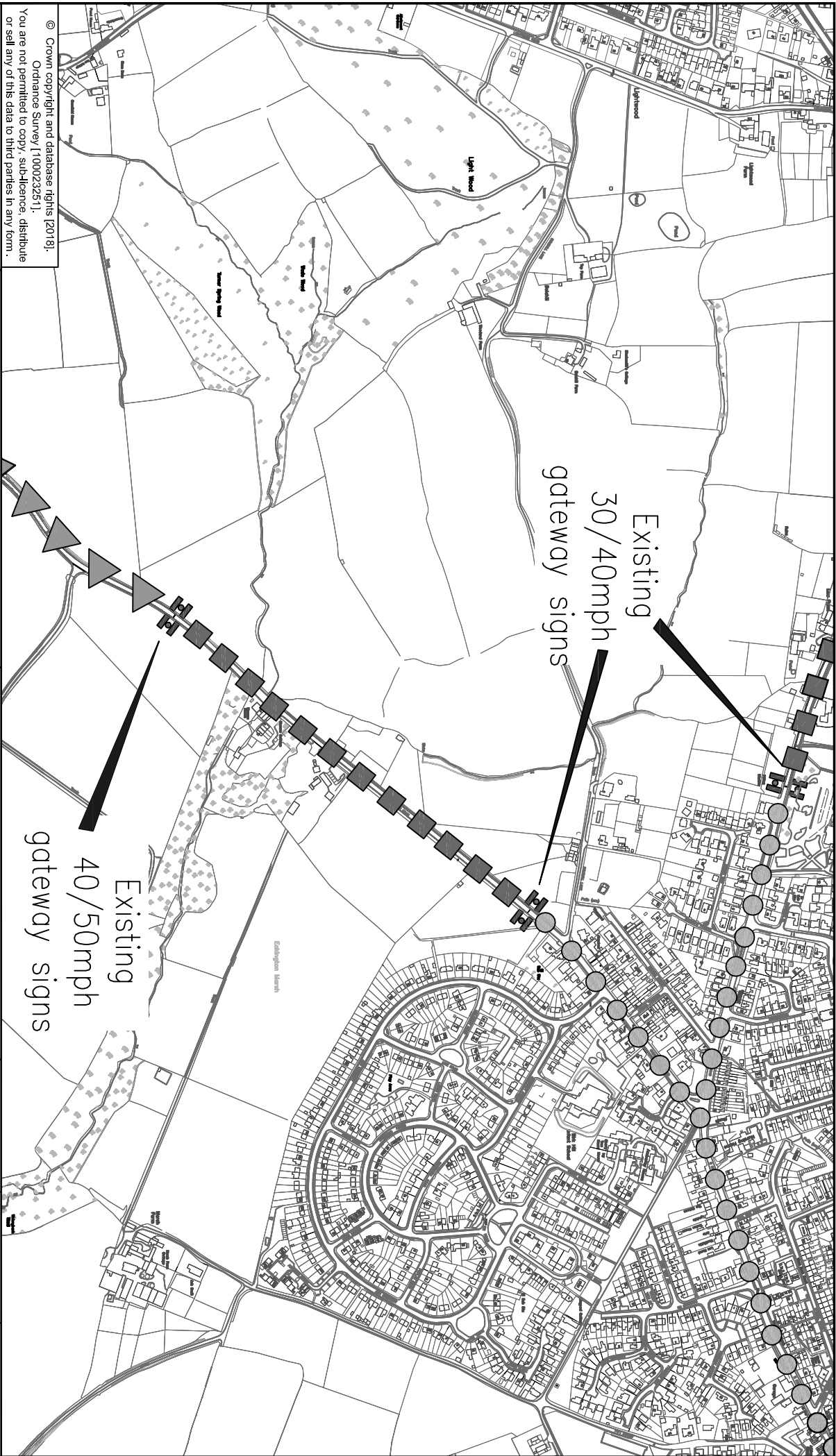
- (5) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

- (6) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Steve Dungworth, extension 38619.

- (7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

- 7.1 The request to introduce a weight limit and a 20mph speed limit together with the installation of a vehicular activated speed sign on the B6052 Chesterfield Road, Eckington be refused.
- 7.2 The Local Member and lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**



© Crown copyright and database rights [2018].  
Ordnance Survey [100023251].  
You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute  
or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



MIKE ASHWORTH  
Strategic Director  
Economy, Transport and Environment

- Existing 30mph speed limit
- Existing 40mph speed limit
- Existing 50mph speed limit

PROJECT TITLE  
B6056, CHESTERFIELD ROAD/  
DRONFIELD ROAD/WEST STREET,  
ECKINGTON

DRAWN  
PHIL BRAISBY  
Date 27/11/18  
CHECKED  
STEVE DUNGWORTH  
Date 27/11/18  
APPROVED  
STEVE DUNGWORTH  
Date 27/11/18

APPENDIX 1

Drawing  
Number  
HMT/PB/516/18

SCALE  
NTS

## 2 VAS (VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS)

### THE USE OF VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS IN DERBYSHIRE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The intention of this guidance is to supplement the County Council's Local Transport Plan Investment Protocol (October 2011). This, through Policy IP83, dictates that infrastructure, which creates a net increase for the authority to maintain, should be used sparingly, and in policy IP42 it identifies Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) specifically, as falling into this category, but with detailed policy to be developed. This guidance puts in place the more detailed procedures to be followed in considering the installation of permanent, temporary or mobile VAS. It will be reviewed as and when required by any revision of the Investment Protocol.

VAS have become a popular, effective, less intrusive form of speed-reduction which can be used as an alternative to more physical measures. These are electronic signs which display a symbol and/or message when triggered by a vehicle travelling at a specific pre-set speed – the threshold speed usually being set at 10% + 2mph above the posted speed limit (i.e. 35mph in a 30mph limit). They are often introduced to supplement rather than replace traditional signing and lining and are aimed at addressing specific road safety problems.

Both **permanent** and **temporary** VAS measures have been utilised in Derbyshire. Research has shown that the effectiveness of permanent VAS reduces as motorists become familiar with them. The advantages of a temporary VAS is that it can be moved around between a number of sites; remaining at one site for a number of months before being moved to another site once motorists have become familiar with it. The sign can then be redeployed to the same site several months later to retain its effectiveness.

VAS have been developed in Derbyshire to address not only problems of exceeding speed limits, but also to encourage drivers to approach hazards – such as bends or junctions – at a safe speed, and to provide hazard warnings where conventional signing alone has not been effective. Analysis of existing sites has shown that, where these signs have been introduced in response to injury collision problems, they have resulted in immediate and ongoing improvements to the casualty record.

There are still relatively few signs of this nature in Derbyshire but there are concerns that to introduce them on a widespread basis would cause drivers to become used to them and their effect would diminish. In response to these concerns we apply a stringent set of criteria to each application we receive, to guard against over-proliferation and to ensure that signs are introduced where they are most needed. This allows the County Council to determine its priorities for investment in VAS and to inform other bodies about where signs will be deployed and where installation is likely to be refused.

The protocol dictates that all of the following criteria must be met for VAS:

- VAS should be considered at sites that have a **collision history associated with inappropriate speed**, or a hazard, that has not been satisfactorily remedied by standard signing. Other signing means must have been tried and have failed; the site must have been subject to a recent speed survey to determine justification for a VAS installation.
- VAS displaying a speed limit should be located at sites which have a history of a **minimum of 6 injury collisions within 1km over the previous 3 years (permanent VAS), for temporary VAS the criteria is a minimum of 5 injury collisions within 1km over the previous 3 years**, and where speed has been a factor in some, if not all the collisions.
- VAS displaying a speed limit should be located at sites where the results of traffic surveys show the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is at least 10% over the speed limit +2mph, measured over a 7-day period. [The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is the speed at which up to 85% of the traffic is travelling]
- Hazard warning VAS should be located at sites which have a history of a **minimum of 6 injury collisions within 1km over the previous 3 years**, and where the hazard has been the cause.
- Requests for VAS that meet these criteria should be prioritised on the basis of a calculated estimate of casualty reduction benefits.

The flexibility of temporary VAS means they are the preferred option but the decision on which type of VAS to be used should be made on a case by case basis. To retain effectiveness, temporary VAS should remain on site for **no longer than 3 months and should not be redeployed at the same site within 6 months**.

Requests for VAS that meet these criteria will be prioritised on the basis of a calculated estimate of casualty reduction benefits.

## 2.2 Installation and Monitoring Criteria

- a) VAS warning of a hazard should be set to operate at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile speed measured before installation. However; discretion may be used to change this depending on the road conditions.
- b) VAS displaying a speed limit should normally be set to operate at the speed limit+ 2mph. However, discretion may be used to change this depending on the road conditions.
- c) The section of road in advance of the VAS must be straight over a reasonable distance to maximise visibility to the sign.
- d) There should be little or no vegetation or street furniture that will block the view of the sign or affect the working of the radar equipment.
- e) There must be sufficient footway or roadside verge to install the sign. There must be reasonable access to a power supply.

- f) The sign should, wherever possible, not be intrusive to nearby residential properties and early consultation should be sought to establish residents' views. If the sign is proposed within the Peak District National Park, early consultation with the National Park Authority should be sought.
- g) VAS displaying a speed limit should be located between 100 and 200 metres beyond the start of the posted speed limit sign, except in urban areas with street lighting where a 30mph speed limit operates and where repeater signs are not allowed.
- h) VAS warning of a hazard should be located between 50 and 100 metres in advance of that hazard.
- i) Permanent VAS should be routinely inspected every six months and provided with regular maintenance, such as cleaning the sign face, removing any obstructing foliage and ensuring that the vehicle detection system is functioning correctly.
- j) All VAS installations should be monitored for effectiveness by regular analysis of speed data and collision records. Any that are considered ineffective should be removed.

### **2.3 Permanent and Temporary Vas - Funding by Borough, District or Parish/Town Councils**

Where a local council has requested a VAS which meets criteria for inclusion in the County Council's programmes but is a low priority for installation at the County Council's expense, then the local council may fund the installation. It must undertake to be responsible for all costs, including long-term maintenance for the life of the installation, and removal if required. All selection, installation and monitoring criteria above will apply, with the exception of criteria 1) e) and g).

### **2.4 Mobile VAS**

Mobile VAS may be deployed in locations which would not meet the criteria for permanent or temporary sites. Decisions on where they may be deployed, and the length of deployment, should be taken through established selection and consultation procedures of the sign's owner, either the County Council or Derby and Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership. The owner may seek contributions to costs from the local council requesting the installation. In no circumstances should mobile VAS be deployed for longer than the three month limit applying to temporary installations.

Any proposal for VAS to be funded through County Council programmes but which does not meet the above criteria must be justified through an Exception Report in Service Plan preparation processes for permanent installations or via a Cabinet Member report for temporary installations.