

Agenda Item No. 4(d)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

7 July 2015

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT – PADFIELD
VILLAGE**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To inform the Cabinet Member of an objection received to a proposed 20mph speed limit for Padfield Village near Glossop and to seek approval to proceed with the proposal.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

The latest national guidance for setting speed limits is contained in Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2013 - Setting Local Speed Limits. One of the priorities for action in this document is to:

“consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones, over time, in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists.”

To clarify, 20mph zones use traffic calming measures, such as road humps or build outs, to reduce vehicle speeds, making the area largely self-enforcing. A 20mph limit applies to roads where the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph and there are no physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds within the areas. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit with boundary signs and repeater signs. The current guidance is that 20mph speed limits should not be considered on arterial routes.

In recent years, other highway authorities in England have been implementing area wide 20mph speed limits, including Manchester City Council, Bristol City Council and Birmingham City Council. However, these are predominantly inner-city urban areas which lend themselves to this type of treatment. There is little available research on 20mph speed limits in more rural settings that are prevalent in a County such as Derbyshire.

Therefore, it has been proposed to implement a 20mph speed limit in Padfield near Glossop to quantify the effect of such a measure and to form a trial site for the rest of the County.

The proposal was advertised between 23 April to 15 May 2015 and one objection and two expressions of support were received. The expressions of support were from the '20's Plenty' campaign and Transition Chesterfield. The objection is from the Police based on the following comments received:

"Traffic flows are low as expected but the survey does show that drivers are travelling at an 85th percentile not exceeding 27 mph and 29 mph along the 2 sections of Platt St –there's a respective 5/6 mph variance from the mean speed and a 7.9 variance from mean on Main Rd East.

Based upon this info mean speeds are at or below Dft guidance of 24 mph, however, the above speeds do give caused for concern regarding compliance because the 85th percentile effectively is a good majority speed indicator of course.

The nature of the roads involved are naturally restricting speeds anyway so it begs the question why formally sign a 20 limit in this situation, but from an enforcement perspective I'd want to avoid any implications where general self-compliance may not be evidenced, so on the 2 sections referred to above would you be prepared to consider necessary physical measures to address the 27 and 29 mph actual speeds?

Traffic flows are lighter around the village of course and the surveys generally show that speeds are lower than the existing 30 limit –most being within the DfT Guidance 24 mph or less mean speed indicator.

For schemes and for enforcement the 85th percentile provides a speed which the majority of drivers do not exceed, so consider realistic.

Platt Street is a good example where 2 survey sites were used -3501 (west) recorded a mean speed of 23 mph with an 85th percentile of 29 mph, so the variation of 6.1 mph is significant –the bottom line being that drivers are travelling at 30 along this section, so effective physical measures would be needed to ensure any 20 limit is sufficiently self –explaining to the majority of road users. Pointless expecting 20 signs alone to restrict speeds of 30 mph.

3498 (east) -85th 27 mph –mean 21.1 again 6.1 variation. This for me shows the enforcement implications in using only mean speeds because realistic speeds are closer to 30 mph than 20, which without effective measures means the 20 could be a comfort blanket on some roads and not achieve the self –compliance necessary and that the community would expect. There can

be no reliance on police routinely enforcing a 20 limit of course to compensate for the lack of supporting measures.”

Officer's Comments

There is evidence and continued research to suggest that there may be strong environmental and public health reasons to implement an area-wide 20mph speed limit. Potential benefits include higher quality of life, stronger communities and encouragement of healthier, greener travel such as by walking and cycling, and boosting the green economy.

The Cabinet Member will be aware of a report of the effectiveness of existing 20mph zones in Derbyshire, dated 13 December 2011 (Minute No. 364/11 refers). However, the national guidance on setting local speed limits has been revised since that date and, with area-wide 20mph speed limits being a relatively new policy area, there is not enough reliable evidence to make firm predictions of the impact in Derbyshire, though it is likely to be positive, and increasingly popular with the public.

It is understandable that Derbyshire Constabulary has concerns about the raised expectations and calls for service that lower speed limits could create, and that any speed limit should effectively be self-enforcing without the need for Police enforcement. As this scheme is essentially a trial, extensive data has been collected, including speed surveys, noise readings and pedestrian counts amongst other things. It is intended to repeat these surveys after one year to quantify the effect of the scheme. Should the data collected indicate widespread abuse of the lower speed limit, a further decision will be required as to whether traffic calming measures should be considered to aid compliance or the speed limit revert back to 30mph.

Should the scheme be taken forward, continual evaluation would be necessary, so that the Council understands the impact of a 20mph limit for the community. This will enable the Council to make informed and robust decisions as to future requests for this type of scheme.

Local Member Comments

Councillors Dave Wilcox, Damien Greenhalgh and Ellie Wilcox made the following comments *“We fully support the proposal for a 20mph speed limit in Padfield. We are delighted that there have been no objections from the local community and that the proposal has been so widely supported. We look forward to its implementation.”*

(3) Financial Considerations This work forms part of the approved 2014-15 Capital Schemes Programme. The approximate cost of this work is £20,000.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The local traffic authority has power under Section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to set local speed limits having regard to the guidance issued by the DfT. This guidance is set out in the DfT Circular 01/2013 - Setting Local Speed Limits. The procedure to be adopted when making orders under Section 84 is set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (the 1996 Regulations). The local authority must carry out a consultation and notice of the proposals must be given in accordance with Regulation 7 of the 1996 Regulations, allowing at least 21 clear days for the receipt of written objections. Any objections received must be considered by the local authority.

Having considered all objections, the Council may determine to introduce the new speed limits. The Order will need to be formally made and advertised, and the requisite signs erected. An Order shall not be made until after the last date for objections. No Order can be made more than two years after the date of publication of the notice of the proposals. No part of a Traffic Regulation Order can come into force before the date on which it is intended to publish a notice of making.

(5) **Environmental Considerations** Better air quality is likely to be achieved, mainly by cutting car use, through making it easier to walk and cycle. Changes in direct carbon emissions are difficult to predict but are likely to be relatively small; the largest impact would be through behaviour change and driving styles. For instance, driving more slowly at a steady pace (less braking and accelerating) may save fuel and carbon dioxide emissions, helping contribute towards the County Council's carbon reduction commitments.

Noise is likely to be reduced as vehicles move more slowly and more people switch to walking and cycling. Improving the safety of the built environment, including the speed at which vehicles travel within built-up areas, will benefit the health of children and others through increased opportunities for physical activity (such as walking to school), and through a reduction in injuries and fatalities associated with road traffic.

(6) **Health Considerations** There is considerable support within public health for the implementation of broader 20mph policies. Many studies indicate that such limits are successful in reducing casualties, particularly among children.

There is also evidence that lower traffic speeds help to encourage cycling and walking, particularly among children. Increasing levels of physical activity is a national and local public health priority, and has been described as a "best buy" for health improvement. Considerable evidence links reduced traffic speed to increases in social interaction and thereby to improved social cohesion, which impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

While few studies have specifically investigated this factor, the reduced traffic emissions that should be generated due to lower speeds would also support the public health agenda, both directly via their impact on respiratory problems and potentially through changing perceptions of the outdoor environment and encouraging physical activity.

Other Considerations

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

(7) **Key Decision** No.

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

(9) **Background Papers** Held on file in the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Steve Alcock, extension 38176.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves that:

10.1 The proposal for a 20mph speed limit for Padfield be implemented as advertised.

10.2 The scheme be monitored closely to quantify its success or otherwise, and the results be used as a yardstick for considering any further schemes of this nature in the County.

10.3 The local Members and objector be notified accordingly.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment