

Local Members Interest

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 16 September 2021

Review of SCC policy on the introduction of additional 20 mph limits/zones

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that:

- a. The introduction of additional 20 mph limits/zones within local neighbourhoods should continue as identified in the Council's strategic programmes of work and as local community priorities established through the Members' Divisional Highways Programme.

Report of Cllr David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to recognise that Staffordshire's programme of highway improvements is informed by legislation, national and local strategy, best practice, and community aspiration.
2. The committee members are invited to consider that highway improvements and, through working with the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, delivery of road safety education, training, and enforcement activities, have together, contributed to Staffordshire having one of the safest highway networks in the country.
3. It is also requested that the Scrutiny Committee recognises and supports the need for ongoing review and that 20 mph speed limits/zones are just one of a range of measures used by the Council to improve road safety and to create an environment that supports sustainable travel modes, and healthier lifestyles.

Report

Background

Request for Scrutiny

4. In March 2021 the Select Committee received a request (Appendix 1) for scrutiny of the County Council's policy regarding the use of 20 mph speed limits. The requestor suggested that 20 mph speed limits should be normalised for built up areas and villages in order to promote safety, public health, sustainability, the

climate and to meet resident's aspirations. The document provided detailed interpretation of national and global road safety advice / best practice and called for the provision of a funding plan to roll out delivery of 20 mph speed limits across wider areas.

5. This report provides background information on the issues raised by the requestor and provides a recommendation on the way forward.

Staffordshire's Policy on Speed Limits

6. Further to a mandate from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2007 that Local Authorities were required to review the setting of speed limits on all 'A' and 'B' roads, the Cabinet agreed a "Speed Limit Policy" that reflected the national guidance at that time.
7. In addition to this, in 2010 the Cabinet approved a phased introduction of 20 mph speed limits outside schools and a number of advisory part-time 20 mph limits were introduced outside schools located on main roads.
8. Subsequently, all speed limits in Staffordshire have been implemented in accordance with the current national guidance "Setting Local Speed Limits" (DfT Circular 01/2013) [Setting local speed limits - GOV.UK](#).
9. Since December 2013 the County Council has implemented twelve 20 mph Speed Limit Orders over a number of roads, including five 20 mph zonal speed limits.

National Guidance on 20 mph Speed Limits

10. The guidance in "Setting Local Speed Limits" states that 20 mph speed limits or zones can be introduced on major streets where there are – or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic. This is in addition to residential streets in cities, towns, and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable.
11. 20 mph "zones" usually cover a number of roads and require physical traffic calming measures or repeater speed limit signing and/or roundel road markings at regular intervals as well as terminal signing at each entrance and exit to a zone. In contrast, 20 mph "limits" are signed but do not necessarily require traffic calming.
12. The guidance states that implementation of 20 mph limits are most appropriate where the mean speed of traffic is already at or below 24 mph. It also states that all speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should also encourage self-compliance without an excessive reliance on enforcement.

Recorded Personal Injury Collisions in Staffordshire

13. The County Council, as the Local Highway Authority (LHA), has a statutory responsibility under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to maintain the safety of its local road network. The Act requires LHAs to carry out studies into road collisions and take appropriate measures to reduce such incidents from occurring. This includes measures such as: education; training; the control of traffic where appropriate; and the implementation of road improvement schemes.
14. Staffordshire can demonstrate a 60% reduction in personal injury collisions on its roads in the ten years 2009-2019. Analysis of the DfT's dataset [RAS41003](#) "Reported Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualty rate per billion vehicle miles by local authority, England" indicates this is the highest reduction recorded from 14 comparable shire counties and that Staffordshire also had the lowest KSI casualty rate in 2019 (within the same cohort).
15. With regard to all casualties, 1,369 people were recorded as injured on roads in Staffordshire in 2019, which was a 9% decrease from the previous year.
16. Comparing data for 2019 with that of 2010, the number of pedal cyclists injured on roads in Staffordshire has fallen by 45% and the number of pedestrian casualties has also fallen by 50%. In total 83% of these collisions took place on a road which had a speed limit of 30mph and 86% of these collisions took place on a single carriageway road. Discounting a collision that took place on a motorway, 36% took place on an A road, 12% on a B road, 17% on a C road and 34% on an unclassified road.
17. Of the 481 contributory factors assigned to the 228 collisions involving either a pedestrian or pedal cyclist in 2019, the contributory factor 'Exceeding speed limit' was assigned eight times by a police officer whilst 'Impaired by alcohol or drugs', was assigned 15 times (seven times to car driver, seven times to a pedestrian and once to a pedal cyclist).

Staffordshire's Integrated Transport and Local Cycling and Walking Strategies

18. Staffordshire's programme of highway and transport improvements is informed by eight Integrated Transport Strategies that have been developed for the District/Boroughs, together with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan 2021 - Staffordshire County Council](#), which was considered by the Prosperous Select Committee in April 2021.
19. Transport Strategy schemes are assessed against the County Council's interconnected priority outcomes:
 - a. Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth
 - b. Be healthier and independent for longer
 - c. Feel safer, happier, and more supported in their community.

20. Staffordshire's LCWIP is a long-term approach to developing cycling and walking networks with a 10-year prioritised programme of improvements, focusing on areas that have the greatest potential for growing walking and cycling trips. The type of schemes to be prioritised through the LCWIP include the introduction of 20 mph speed limits as well as new cycle routes, crossing facilities, traffic calming and footway widening.

21. The programme of highway and transport improvements also includes targeted Local Safety Schemes and Local Community Priorities identified through Members' Divisional Highway Programmes.

Planning Guidance for New Developments

22. The Department for Transport's Manual for Streets (2007) [Manual for the Streets \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk) advises on road layout designs to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20 mph on residential streets (rather than imposed 20 mph speed limits). It notes that conflict among various road user groups can be minimised or avoided by reducing the speed and flow of motor vehicles and, ideally, designers should aim to create streets that control vehicle speeds naturally rather than having to rely on unsympathetic traffic-calming features.

23. Staffordshire's own Residential Design Guide (2000) [Residential Design Guide - Staffordshire County Council](#) also aims to keep vehicle flows and traffic speeds low in the vicinity of homes and advises on road layouts to produce acceptable vehicle speeds and provide for the needs of sustainable travel modes.

24. In addition, there is a requirement for all infrastructure delivered in Staffordshire, including new development schemes, to consider the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design (2020) [Cycle infrastructure design \(LTN 1/20\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-note-1-20-cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20). This guidance details essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot based on national and international best practice; and annual reports will be published on Local Highway Authorities grading our performance.

Brief Overview of National Strategies, Campaigns, Research, and Implemented Schemes

25. The [Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) (CWIS) (2016-2021) supports the transformation of local areas through change to tackle congestion, extend the opportunity to improve physical and mental health and support local economies. The strategy is to be updated with a second 4-year statutory cycling and walking investment strategy.

26. In 2018 the DfT commissioned a study into the effectiveness of 20 mph signed only speed limits [20mph research study - process and impact evaluation: headline report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). It concluded that the guidance set out in the DfT's Circular Setting Local Speed Limits, remained broadly valid and suggested that road characteristics, rather than a 30 mph or 20 mph speed limit, have a much

larger impact on the speeds that drivers choose to adopt. However, it also called for more collaboration between traffic authorities, relevant partners, and communities to deliver 20 mph limits as part of an integrated approach to addressing transport, community, environment, and health objectives.

27. In 2019 RoSPA produced A Guide to 20 mph Limits for non-road safety professionals [Introducing 20 mph Limits \(rospa.com\)](#). It notes that drivers who travel at higher speeds have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them; taking them longer to stop and causing greater injury to any vehicle occupant, pedestrian or rider involved in a collision. It also refers to the importance for drivers to understand and comply with lower speed limits and the need for a co-ordinated strategy of complimentary measures to support this. The Guide also provides a summary of evaluation evidence and experience of a number of local authorities that have implemented 20 mph limits.
28. In December 2020 Cheshire East Council resolved to support “the principle of introducing 20 mph speed restrictions where appropriate – not a blanket measure” through a review of its Speed Management Strategy [Agenda item - Notices of Motion | Cheshire East Council](#).
29. In July 2021 the Welsh Government initiated a public consultation on a proposal “to introduce the 20 mph default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales” [20mph | GOV.WALES](#). Future policy will be informed by the consultation alongside data from eight initial 20 mph default speed limit schemes across Wales.
30. 20's Plenty for Us is a campaign that refers to The General Assembly of the United Nations endorsement of 20 mph speed limits. The campaign’s website [www.20splenty.org](#) calls for implementation on residential streets and in town and village centres, unless full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit on particular streets.

Recommendation

31. The introduction of additional 20 mph limits/zones within local neighbourhoods should continue as identified in the Council’s strategic programmes of work and as local community priorities established through the Members’ Divisional Highways Programme.

Link to Strategic Plan

32. Continuing to implement strategic Highways and Transport programmes will support the following priorities, as identified in the Strategic Plan:
 - a. Help Staffordshire’s economy to grow and generate more good jobs
 - b. Invest in infrastructure for growing communities
 - c. Improve education and training so that life-long learning offers everyone the opportunity to succeed
 - d. Inspire healthy, independent living

e. Support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

N/a

Community Impact

N/a

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1: Request for Scrutiny 2021

Setting Local Speed Limits (DfT Circular 01/2013) - [Setting local speed limits - GOV.UK](#).

Reported Killed or Seriously Injured (KS) casualty rate per billion vehicle miles by local authority, England – DfT - [RAS41003](#)

LCWIP Report Final April 2021 -) [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan 2021 - Staffordshire County Council](#),

Manual for Streets 2007 - [Manual for the Streets \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Residential Design Guide SCC 2000 - [Residential Design Guide - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Local Transport Note 1-20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design 2020 - [Cycle infrastructure design \(LTN 1/20\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Cycling and walking investment strategy 2017 - [Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#)

DfT 20mph Research Study 2018 - [20mph research study - process and impact evaluation: headline report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

RoSPA Guide to 20mph Limits 2019 - [Introducing 20 mph Limits \(rospa.com\)](#).

Cheshire East Council 2020 - [Agenda item - Notices of Motion | Cheshire East Council](#).

Welsh Government consultation on 20 mph speed limits - [20mph | GOV.WALES](#)

20's Plenty for Us Campaign - [www.20splenty.org](#)

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