



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1ST APRIL 2014

SUBJECT: SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the evaluation and review of the current adopted Speed Management Strategy and its operation in Caerphilly County Borough.
- 1.2 To seek Members' views and support for recommendations on appropriate changes to ensure that the Speed Management Strategy is consistent with Welsh Government Policy and current guidance.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council adopted its existing Speed Management Strategy in May 2009. The main aim of the Strategy is to make a positive contribution to casualty reduction and to encourage slower speeds. In response to a number of issues raised by Members, a review of the Strategy has been undertaken and considered the following:

REVIEW: changes to the Strategy required as a result of new or revised technical guidance, new national casualty reduction targets, changes to the structure of the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership and adaptation to the specific circumstances and requirements for the borough.

EVALUATION: to test the outcomes of implementing the Speed Management Strategy against the stated aims using data collected from customer requests and road traffic surveys.

- 2.2 The review has shown that the Speed Management Strategy remains largely fit for purpose. The main recommended change is to incorporate a 20mph advisory limit appraisal for routes on the classified network that have a main attractor of vulnerable road users i.e. schools.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 To work towards the Council's corporate objective of improving peoples' living environment through targeted actions, regulation, information and advice.
- 3.2 Engineering Division Objective: To provide safe and efficient transport and land drainage infrastructure through quality services delivered by means of cost effective management, maintenance and improvement of the networks.
- 3.3 Engineering Division Objective: To work towards a safer environment though positive measures to reduce road accidents and particularly by protecting and providing for vulnerable

road users.

- 3.4 The report links to the Safer and Prosperous themes of “Caerphilly Delivers”, the Local Services Board (LSB) Single Integrated plan.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 The Council’s adopted Speed Management Strategy (SMS – refer to Appendix A) is an evidence based appraisal aimed at reducing speeds travelled along local roads by educating drivers to reduce their speed or by using engineering measures such as traffic calming in appropriate circumstances. The SMS sets out a staged approach to interventions for speed related problems based on recorded mean speeds and casualty data. All recorded road traffic speed data is shared with the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership (WRCRP) who operate under the banner of ‘Go-Safe’ and are responsible along with Gwent Police for enforcing speed limits within Caerphilly County Borough.
- 4.1.2 The SMS has been in operation since May 2009 and the initial response to each service request/problem is to gain evidence/scale of the issue by undertaking a speed survey. The results are then evaluated against the intervention criteria to determine the appropriate course of action. The majority of requests are initiated by community concerns received from residents, Local Members, AMs and MPs. The concerns usually relate to the perceived risk posed by motorists travelling at inappropriate or excessive speeds.
- 4.1.3 Inappropriate vehicle speed discourages sustainable travel and increases the likelihood and severity of injury caused in a collision, especially where vulnerable road users are involved, and can have a detrimental effect in local communities. The operation of the SMS has enabled the authority to respond to service requests in a consistent and equitable manner and to identify, prioritise and respond to evidence based road risks arising from speeding motorists.

4.2 REVIEW

Changes to Highway Law and National Guidance

- 4.2.1 Since adoption of the SMS Welsh Government Circular No 24/2009 ‘Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales’ (October 2009) has been issued. This requires local authorities to review speed limits on county roads taking into account the purpose, nature and character. Whilst the circular has not directly impacted on the SMS, it is supportive of 20mph limits and zones in appropriate circumstances. Therefore the SMS is considered consistent with this guidance.
- 4.2.2 The Department for Transport’s (DfT) recent ‘Setting Local Speed Limits’ guidance in Road Circular 1/2013 applicable in England has been used to inform the review of the SMS. This guidance continues to encourage highway authorities to adopt the Institution of Highways and Transportation’s ‘Safety Management Guidelines’, in which road hierarchies are adopted that reflect a road’s function and the mix of traffic that it carries. This approach has been used to develop the SMS and is also being considered in the on-going review of speed limits on A and B roads within the County Borough (note this will be the subject of a future report to Members once this review has been completed).
- 4.2.3 Although DfT Circular 1/2013 is not fully replicated in the current Welsh Circular 24/2009 the following guidance on the application of 20mph speed limits or zones in England is relevant in Wales:

“ Traffic authorities can, over time, introduce 20mph speed limits or zones on:

- *Major streets where there are – or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or 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**”.*

4.2.4 The SMS intervention criteria (refer to section 8 of the SMS in Appendix A) also needs to be consistent with highway law and consequently set at a reasonable intervention level. The Highway Code states that a 30mph speed limit applies to traffic on all roads with street lighting in built up areas unless signed otherwise. This has informed the trigger points set within the SMS.

4.2.5 In July 2013 Welsh Government (WG) published their revised ‘Road Safety Framework for Wales’. This set out their priorities for casualty reduction and identified new targets for local authorities.

4.2.6 The aims and commitment of the SMS have been reviewed in light of this new national guidance and remains appropriate and compatible (refer to Appendices B and C). It is proposed to amend the SMS to incorporate the new casualty reduction targets (refer to Appendix D).

20mph limits and zones

4.2.7 One of the two main sources of funding for 20mph limits or zones is the WG’s Safe Routes in Communities (SRIC) Grant. WG assesses local authority bids for SRIC schemes against a number of factors that are a requirement for bids e.g. evidence of school involvement, effectiveness of any scheme in changing pupil behaviour, effectiveness on improving safety and reducing casualties. The WG Road Safety Grant is the other main source of funding but only sites that have a history of personal injury collisions can be submitted limiting the range of bids that can be promoted, unless they are around schools sites. The majority of 20mph limits and zones that have been delivered in the borough in the recent years has been funded from WG Road Safety Grant and focused on a localised area outside schools or a limited area along adjacent roads.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

4.2.8 Recent legislative developments have seen the WG bring new Primary Legislation forward in the form of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which, became law in November 2013 and will be fully implemented in due course. The Act when fully implemented requires that local authorities in Wales:

- Identify and map the network of routes within their areas that are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling to access services/facilities.
- Identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated network for walking and cycling to access services/facilities.
- Deliver an enhanced network by requiring local authorities to secure new and improved active travel routes and facilities each year.
- The statutory WG guidance to sit alongside the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 is still awaited but funding of £18,000 has been provisionally allocated to the Council to take these forward in 2014/15.

4.2.9 Members have previously expressed concerns about safety at locations other than schools where there may be a high number of vulnerable people e.g. playgrounds, and requested officers review the SMS to increase its flexibility to cater for such concerns. However, given the introduction of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and the duties therein, it is considered more appropriate that such locations are reviewed as part of this mapping exercise and traffic management, pedestrian and cyclists infrastructure assessed and appropriate enhancements

delivered where necessary.

4.3 EVALUATION

- 4.3.1 The implementation of the strategy is being adhered to and provides a consistent and transparent mechanism for responding to requests and complaints about speeding motorists. The appraisal also reduces/minimises subjectivity in the process. A positive contribution is being made to statutory duties, education of motorists and casualty reduction however these areas of activity are larger than this strategy and to make robust and measurable claims about the amount of benefit would require a large-scale study.
- 4.3.2 A quantitative appraisal of a small sample of Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) sites has been completed (refer to Appendix E). The appraisal has compared the recorded post VAS implementation speed data against the pre-treatment speeds recorded to evidence what speed reduction has been achieved. The initial results from this sample of sites have proven the project to be effective in reducing speeds at all 5 sites. The initial results show the greatest reduction has been achieved on Class III roads away from the A and B classified network.
- 4.3.4 Plans are in hand to enhance the operational efficiency of VAS units by installing remote access and control at over 50% of VAS sites (where this is possible) by the end of March 2014. Additional sites will be enhanced as and when funding allows.
- 4.3.5 The new technology improves efficiency and eliminates the need to turn off the VAS units manually. Additional VAS provided, funded by grants and community councils and partnerships, has removed the need to rotate the VAS reducing the costs of the operation of the service considerably.
- 4.3.6 In summary, the delivery of the strategy continues to make a contribution to all of the existing 5 aims of the strategy. The operation of the strategy is conducted in a transparent manner. The initial results show that the speed reduction is in line with anticipated results, of the five sites assessed, only one site saw less than a 1 mph change in the mean speed. This site was in a 40mph limit area and the mean speed record was less than 2 mph above the posted limit. This is consistent with a recent report on the Effectiveness of Speed Indicator Devices including VAS on reducing vehicle speeds in London by TRL that found a statistical significant speed reduction of between 1 and 7 mph.
- 4.3.7 As mentioned above, the SMS makes a contribution to the Council's wider Road Safety Strategy together with accident remedial interventions and Council's programme of education, training and publicity initiatives. As detailed in Appendix F, the average of the 3 year killed or seriously injured collisions has reduced throughout the borough by 23 (43%) although the collision rate has remained fairly consistent since 2010. The reduction in slight collisions is also notable at a reduction on the 3 year average before and after of 76(31%).

4.4 OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Speed Data Collection

- 4.4.1 The volume of requests/complaints has remained fairly consistent across the past 3 years, on average 180 requests are received each year. The number of requests/complaints that satisfy the criteria for intervention is approximately 10% of all requests. The VAS treatment sites therefore remain manageable within existing resources. There are 55 VAS sites operational across the borough at present with only 4 qualifying sites awaiting funding for the provision of VAS.
- 4.4.2 The following results were observed where complaints were received in a 30mph speed limit area. These complaints did not satisfy the criteria included in the SMS:
- 70% of mean speeds collected were below 26mph.

- 90% were below the trigger point of 32mph.

4.4.3 As stated in the strategy speed data taken at the VAS sites will be assessed and the VAS removed/reallocated if the speed reduction is maintained over a period when not in operation in consultation with the local member (except where they have been funded by community councils and partnerships). This will permit the sites waiting treatment to come on line and ensure the available VAS units are being used efficiently and effectively.

20mph Limits and Zones – Activity since the Strategy was adopted

4.4.4 The following 20 mph Limits and Zones schemes have been completed and implemented since the Speed Management Strategy was adopted in 2009 having satisfied the criteria.

- Cwmfelinfach Primary School – Extension to existing 20mph limit – Funded by S106 (2014)
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Y Castell - Funded by Road Safety Grant (2013)
- Panside Primary School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2012)
- Pontllanfraith Primary School - Funded by Road Safety Grant (2012)
- Deri Primary School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2011)
- Cwmaber Infants School - Funded by Road Safety Grant (2011)
- Cwmaber Junior School - Funded by Road Safety Grant (2011)
- Plas y felin Primary School - Funded by Road Safety Grant (2011)
- Blackwood Primary School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2011)
- Ynysddu Primary School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2010)
- Bedwas Junior School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2010)
- Cwmcarn Primary School – Funded by Road Safety Grant (2009)
- Tyn y Wern Primary School – Funded by S106 contributions (2013)

The following schemes have been submitted to WG for SRIC grant funding:

- Penllwyn Primary School.
- Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School.

4.5 PILOT ADVISORY 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

4.5.1 A pilot study was undertaken which implemented a part time advisory 20mph limit in Machen along the A468 adjacent to the primary school. The project has been evaluated over time and the advisory limit has proven effective (note this has been the subject of a previous report to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny committee). The latest evaluation has recorded a combined mean speed reduction of 5.4 mph in the AM and 5.5 mph reduction in the PM school gate times. The pilot project has proven effective on this classified road.

4.5.2 The use of advisory 20mph speed limits should be considered where a mandatory 20mph limit could not be promoted along the classified network providing the other criteria of the SMS are satisfied i.e. has a School Travel Plan or a commitment to produce a plan and a funding source has been identified.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this report, however having a fit-for-purpose Speed Management Strategy in place is especially important to people who fall under protected characteristic groups; in particular children, older people and people with disabilities such as mobility or visual impairments, and so links to the Council's Strategic Equality Objective 3 - Physical Access.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 All comments received from the consultees listed have been incorporated in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee is asked for its views on the following recommendations before they are reported to Cabinet for approval:

- Amend the SMS to include the new Road Safety Framework for Wales casualty reduction targets, reflect the change to the WRCRP name and current practice/ liaison regarding road traffic matters with Gwent Police and other changes as a result of legislation and changes as detailed in Appendix C.
- Include the use of an advisory 20mph speed limit as detailed in the report where a mandatory speed limit cannot be promoted.
- Continue to bid for Safe Routes in Communities funding and Road Safety Grant and include 20mph limits and zones in the form where they can be supported and satisfy the existing SMS criteria.
- Continue to use the Speed Management Strategy as an efficient and effective approach to speed management on roads in Caerphilly County Borough.
- Review and assess other road safety concern sites for vulnerable people e.g. playgrounds, as part of the duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure the Speed Management Strategy remains fit for purpose in light of current legislation and national guidance in order to respond appropriately to community concern about inappropriate or excessive vehicle speeds.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Department for Transport, (1999), Highway (Road Humps) Regulations 1999, Statutory Instruments SI 1999/1025. HMSO, 1999;
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (1999b), Statutory Instrument 1999 No 1026. The Highways (Traffic Calming) Regulations 1999. HMSO, 1999;
The Road Traffic Regulation Act (Amendment) Order 1999, Statutory Instrument No 1999/1608 – 20mph Speed Limits;
Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002;
Road Traffic Act 1988;
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
Highways Act 1980;
The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations;1996, Statutory Instrument 1996, No.2489.

Author: Liz Gibby, Senior Assistant Engineer, Transport Strategy and Road Safety
Consultees: Cllr T Williams – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering
Cllr D T Davies – Chair of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Cllr E M Aldworth – Vice Chair of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Jan Jones – Ward Member for Ynysddu
Cllr C. Cuss – Ward Member for Twyn Carno
Sandra Aspinall – Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Terry Shaw – Head of Engineering Services
Mrs Gail Williams – Interim Monitoring Officer
Nicole Scammell – Acting Director of Corporate Services
John Rogers – Principal Solicitor
Clive Campbell – Transportation Engineering Manager
Dean Smith – Principal Engineer, Traffic Management
Gemma Thomas – Principal Engineer, Transport Strategy and Road Safety
David Thomas – Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Sian Phillips – HR Manager

Appendices:

Appendix A – Copy of the adopted Speed Management Strategy
Appendix B – Review of the existing aims of the adopted Speed Management Strategy
Appendix C – Review of the Commitments contained in the adopted Speed Management Strategy
Appendix D – Proposed changes to the Speed Management Strategy
Appendix E – Evaluation of VAS Test Site Data
Appendix F – Evaluation of Road Traffic Collisions

Background Papers

Department for Transport Setting Local Speed Limits Circular 1/2003, January 2013
Welsh Assembly Government Circular No 24/2009 Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales (October 2009).
Effectiveness of Speed Indicator Devices on reducing vehicle speeds in London – PPR 314, TRL (Feb 2008)
Report to Scrutiny regarding the - Advisory part time 20mph speed limit pilot scheme – A468 Commercial Road, Machen, and September 2013
Speed Management Strategy, Caerphilly County Borough Council (2009)
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report: 20mph speed limits and zones, 1st April 2008
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report: 20 mph speed limits and zones, update report, 17th February 2009
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report: Overview of Road Safety Issues and Services in Caerphilly County Borough, 18th May 2010
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report: Update on Road Safety Delivery in Caerphilly County Borough, 6th June 2011