

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR DAVID MITCHELL STREETSCENE & TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report has been produced further to Minute 117 of Council on 1st March 2010 which set out a £1.1M four year programme relating to the provision of 20mph speed limits in residential areas within Wirral. The commitment to this initiative was reiterated in a Council Notice of Motion in July 2011 and in the 2012/13 budget approved by Council on 1st March 2012 (Minute 131 refers).
- 1.2 The report seeks approval for the key principles and timetable for the project and requests authority for the Director of Technical Services to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012.
- 1.3 The report also seeks approval for the use of external consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to support the delivery of the whole £1.1M project if required and Members are also asked to endorse the provision of further funding in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of the initiative as well as recognise the need for revenue growth in the future to cover the future maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Wirral Council has been making steady progress in improving road safety since 2005, in particular with reference to the number of people killed or seriously injured (All KSIs) and children killed or seriously injured (Child KSIs). During the last 12 years, since the baseline for the most recent National Road Safety Target (average for the years 1994 to 1998), the number of road crashes which involved injuries to people have more than halved from 1318 down to just over 613 in 2010.
- 2.2 I am pleased to note that Wirral has met the long term national target for reducing the number of children killed or seriously injured (KSI) by 50%. There were a total of 19 children killed or seriously injured in 2010 compared

to the baseline average of 38 during the years 1994 to 1998. Further research into child KSI casualties has shown however that although total numbers of child KSI's are decreasing and the number of casualties is low compared to other road user groups, Wirral has twice the rate of child pedestrian KSI's per head of population compared to the Great Britain average for 2010. We are committed to continuing to take a range of measures to address this imbalance.

2.3 Progress has also been seen relating to the total number of road deaths and serious injuries with a reduction of 39.46% against the national target 40% set against the same baseline. There were a total of 108 people killed or seriously injured in 2010 compared to the baseline average of 178 KSI casualties.

2.4 Whilst the achievements to date are welcomed, progress against the current year's KSI target has slipped and it is recognised that Wirral's performance on road safety requires continued focus and further improvement hence road safety remains a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

At its meeting on 2nd November 2009, Council determined:

- That improving road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users such as children, adult pedestrians and cyclists should continue as a top priority.
- The use of permanent or time variable 20mph speed limits should be further explored by the Director of Technical Services in partnership with the Police if they believe it appropriate to do so.

2.5 At its meeting on 1st March 2010, Council resolved that a sum of £1.1m (over 4 years) be allocated to reduce traffic speeds outside schools and in residential areas, where there are higher numbers of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists.

2.6 On 18th July 2011 following a notice of motion, Council resolved :

Therefore, instructs the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with residents, Area Forums and Ward Councillors to commence the programme of works necessary to implement 20mph speed limits on all non-major residential roads, setting out a prioritised timetable for completion of the scheme and starting with existing 'Accidents Down 2 Zero' areas, where appropriate.

2.7 In June 2011, the Department for Transport (DfT) published a statement announcing that relaxations were to be made to some of the bureaucratic legislation relating to the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The DfT also indicated that it wanted to reduce the need for Council's to use speed humps in 20mph zones and make it easier and cheaper for Council to implement variable speed limits outside schools. It was further indicated that the Signs Policy Review would be published in Summer 2011 and revised guidance on speed limit signing would be issued, which would provide more flexibility to local authorities

- 2.8 The DfT had indicated in its new Road Safety Strategic Framework that it would update its guidance on 20 mph speed limits, including providing an additional 'toolkit' to assist local authorities. My Officers have written to the DfT regarding this guidance and seeking clarification of 20mph speed signage and have been advised that a consultation is planned on speed limit guidance in 2012. Officers have also been awaiting the publication of the final report for the traffic signing changes and contacted DfT about the timing of this publication.
- 2.9 It was expected that a relaxation in signing requirements relating to 20mph speed limits and variable speed limits was likely to have significant implications for both the overall numbers of signs and their position on the highway to conform to any new requirements. Additionally long term maintenance cost savings were also expected following the changes identified by this Government review.
- 2.10 In October 2011, Government published this policy review of traffic signs, however, the changes in traffic signs regulations which it discussed are largely due to be introduced in 2014. In addition, the expected changes permitting formal legally enforceable time specific variable speed limits were not included, although the DfT have indicated a new sign assembly for *advisory* time specific variable speed limits for use outside schools. My Officers are currently investigating the implications of these changes to the signing regulations, however it is important to note that the number of accidents in the vicinity of schools on major routes has dramatically reduced in the past three years.
- 2.11 Physical works such as traffic calming to redress inappropriate speed are not always appropriate for main routes, and in some cases the introduction of variable speed limits have been trialled in a limited number of locations within the UK. Currently, the DfT are evaluating the effectiveness of these trial variable speed limits. Any such scheme would need specific design approval by the DfT and Minister before it could be implemented.
- 2.12 Despite Government circulating a consultation document to all highway authorities in December 2009, seeking views/comment on setting local speed limits, the Department for Transport Circular 01/06 is the most recent definitive guidance on this issue.
- 2.13 In its Circular 01/06 the DfT state that:
- 75 *"Successful 20 mph zones and limits should be generally self enforcing. Traffic Authorities should take account of the level of police enforcement required before installing either of these measures. 20 mph speed limits are unlikely to be complied with on roads where vehicle speeds are substantially higher than this and, unless such limits are accompanied by the introduction of traffic calming measures, police forces may find it difficult to routinely enforce the 20 mph limit..."*
- 82 *"Research into 20 mph limits carried out by Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) showed that, where speed limits alone were introduced,*

reductions of only about 2 mph in 'before' speeds were achieved. 20 mph speed limits are therefore, only suitable on areas where vehicle speeds are already low (the Department would suggest where mean speeds are 24 mph or below), or where additional traffic calming measures are planned as part of the strategy."

- 2.14 In November 2011, Merseyside Police wrote to the Chief Executives of each of the Merseyside local authorities setting out their support for widespread measures to improve road safety, including 20 mph speed limits. However, they did raise the long standing concern expressed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that unless there is full engineering there would be no *routine* enforcement. They support the guidance contained within the DfT Circular 01/06. The letter and extract of the ACPO guidance to Chief Police Officers is included in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.15 The Police have also raised general concerns over the implementation of 20 mph speed limits on main/strategic roads, or through routes where the overall design and layout of the existing highway is not conducive to routine compliance by drivers.
- 2.16 Whilst some residential routes may not be suitable for a 20 mph speed limit by signing alone, it would seem sensible that Wirral adopt the generic guidance suggested by the DfT of not implementing speed limits on roads where the mean speeds are 25 mph or above without also introducing further physical calming measures to encourage self-compliance.
- 2.17 Council reiterated its commitment to this initiative in its Budget Resolution for 2012/13 approved on 1st March 2012 (Minute 131 refers) and the detail of how it is proposed that this initiative will be implemented is set out in the next section of this report.

3.0 PROPOSED 20MPH IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS PROJECT

- 3.1 The purpose of this project is to introduce a 20mph speed limit on every residential road in the Borough where it is anticipated that mean vehicle speeds are already at or below 24mph. This obviously excludes the small number of residential roads where 20mph Zones with traffic calming measures are already in place.
- 3.2 The major and minor distributor road network (where speeds will typically be greater than 25mph and it would not be appropriate to introduce 20mph speed limits) dissects the Borough into over 100 areas. This project will see the introduction of approximately 2100 'gateways' into the lower speed areas which correspond to the introduction of approximately 4100 new sign posts and 6300 new signs in addition to approximately 4300 repeater signs on existing lighting columns.
- 3.3 So far an exercise has been undertaken to optimise these areas for operational purposes and when the existing 20mph roads have been taken into account this breaks the Borough down into 132 'zones' as shown on the

four plans in **Appendix 2**. A large scale version of these plans has also been placed in the Members' Room.

3.4 In terms of the implementation of this project it is proposed that the programme of work will be broken down into two broad phases with the first phase of work spread equally across the eleven Area Forum areas as far as possible. Officers have prioritised 'zones' for the first phase based on existing "Accidents Two Zero" areas, active community groups with an interest in road safety and the presence of schools, however it is proposed that Area Forums are formally consulted on this issue during the June cycle of meetings whilst the design, procurement and statutory advertisement processes referred to below are ongoing. The proposed phasing of the project for consultation with Area Forums is shown in **Appendix 3**.

3.5 In terms of funding for the project £550k has been approved for 2012/13 and it will be essential that the Council maintains its commitment to this initiative with a further £275k being required in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to ensure the holistic vision of reducing speed limits in all residential areas is achieved.

3.6 Based on this funding profile the timetable for the project is as follows:

April 2012 to September 2012:

- Statutory advertisement of all 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders
- Consultation with Area Forums
- Site surveys and preparation of sign schedules (Phase 1)
- Preparation of tender documents and invitation of tenders from suitable contractors (Phase 1)
- Cabinet award tender for Phase 1 Works in September 2012

October 2012 to March 2013:

- Implementation of Phase 1 Works
- Resolve any objections to 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders
- Site surveys and preparation of sign schedules (Phase 2)

April 2013 to September 2013:

- Conclude Phase 1 Works
- Preparation of tender documents and invitation of tenders from suitable contractors (Phase 2)
- Cabinet award tender for Phase 2 Works in September 2013

October 2013 to March 2014:

- Implementation of Phase 2 Works

April 2014 to September 2014:

- Conclude Phase 2 Works

3.7 An initial assessment has been undertaken of the staffing resource required to successfully manage and implement this project and due to the scale of the work programme for 2012/13 which includes the Transportation Capital Programme, improvement schemes at New Brighton and Hoylake Station and the 2012 Womens Golf and 2014 Open Golf, it is likely that external traffic

management consultant resource may be required to support the delivery of this project at least in the first year. For this reason approval is sought to commission external consultant support up to a value of £150k to deliver the whole £1.1M project if required however this work will be undertaken by in-house resource where possible and alternative delivery options such as a “design and build” tendering approach are also being investigated.

- 3.8 To maximise the impact of this initiative and help promote the ‘culture change’ of reduced speeds in residential areas it is proposed that up to £100k of the overall £1.1M allocation is set aside for complementary marketing and publicity campaigns and activities during the life of the project.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Objections may be received as part of the statutory advertisement process for the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders and by the time such objections have been considered and resolved it may not be possible for the ‘zones’ concerned to be included in the first phase of works commencing in October 2012. To mitigate this risk it is proposed that all ‘zones’ will be advertised from the outset and if some of the ‘zones’ planned for the first phase cannot be implemented due to objections then they can easily be substituted for other second phase ‘zones’ with no objections in the Area Forum area concerned.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 An alternative option to improve road safety in residential areas would be to introduce conventional traffic calming measures rather than reduced speed limits, however this would be prohibitively expensive to treat all areas across the Borough.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As described in section 3.4 above it is proposed that Area Forums are formally consulted on which ‘zones’ in their areas should be included in the first phase of this initiative.
- 6.2 As part of the statutory advertisement process for the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders there will be formal advertisements in the local press, notices posted on site and information posted at key locations accessed by local communities.
- 6.3 As described in section 3.8 it is proposed that up to £100k is set aside for complementary marketing and publicity campaigns and activities to promote this initiative.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 8.1 Financial implications: £550k has been allocated for this project in the Council's revenue programme for 2012/13 and it is anticipated that a further £275k will be required in each of the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete this initiative.
- 8.2 Staffing implications: It is normal practice for the in-house design and supervision fees associated with a project of this nature to be allocated against the overall cost of the scheme however as described in section 3.7 it is likely that external traffic management consultant resource may be required to support the delivery of the overall £1.1M project up to a maximum value of £150,000.
- 8.3 Asset management implications: This initiative will see the introduction of in the region of 4100 new sign posts and 10,600 new signs onto the highway network. Typically signs of this nature have a life of between 10 and 15 years and as they are 'mandatory' Traffic Order signs the Council has a statutory duty to make sure they are properly maintained and prompt action is taken to replace missing or damaged signs.
- 8.4 Based on the scale of this signing programme it is anticipated that a future allocation of £100k per annum revenue growth will be required from 2014/15 onwards to cover the future maintenance of the new signs introduced as part of this initiative and Cabinet are requested to endorse the principle of this allocation subject to a further report to a future meeting regarding the maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Resources from the Council's Legal Services Department will be required to process the statutory advertisement of the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Lower vehicle speeds may lead to reduced carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Approve the key principles and timetable for the project as described in section 3.0;
- (2) Endorse the proposal to allocate a further £275k for this project in each of the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas;
- (3) Approve the use of external traffic management consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to deliver the whole £1.1M project if required as described in section 3.7;
- (4) Authorise the Director of Technical Services to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012;
- (5) Endorse the principle of a future allocation of £100k per annum revenue growth from 2014/15 onwards subject to a further report to a future Cabinet regarding the maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 14.1 The purpose of the recommendations is to enable the introduction of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas across the Borough.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter from Merseyside Police
Appendix B: Proposed 20mph 'zones' (four plans)
Appendix C: Phasing of 'zones' by Area Forum area

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	18 July 2011
Cabinet Budget Proposal 2011-12	21 February 2011
Cabinet Budget Proposal 2010-11	22 February 2010
Council	1 March 2010
Council	2 November 2009