

North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee

22 October 2025

Draft Speed Management Strategy

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share the draft NYC Speed Management Strategy with the Committee for their consideration and comment.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2023, following a review of the Council's 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy, Executive approved a report ([Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive, 04/07/2023 11:00](#), with recommendations to produce a Speed Management Strategy (SMS) and for the SMS to underpin the implementation of a programme of planned speed limit reviews, in order to generate a pipeline of schemes. The report also contained a recommendation to delegate approval of the SMS to Environment Executive. A further recommendation was for the core criteria for introducing 20mph speed limits and zones, as set out in the existing 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy, to remain unchanged.
- 2.2 Setting the right speed limit plays a key role in road safety and helps set the conditions for encouraging active modes, such as walking and cycling. Further, given speed limits across the county have evolved over time, leading to a variable approach in their application, the case for adopting a consistently applied, countywide and planned process for the assessment, setting and review of speed limits, is strong.
- 2.3 There are demonstrable benefits in adopting a proactive strategy for general speed management, with the aim of ensuring a greater level of coherence for the road user and safer roads across the urban and rural network, along with wider benefits for Place, active travel and carbon reduction. To that extent, the SMS aligns with the ambitions of the Council's Local Transport Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Public Health priorities.
- 2.4 The SMS, which is attached as Appendix 1, has been produced in line with national guidance and its primary function is to provide the framework within which NYC will review and implement speed limits on the local road network.

3.0 DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

- 3.1 With respect to the planned programme of speed limit reviews, the key distinction here from the current reactive approach of investigating speed limits only in response to service requests from parish or town councils, is that the reviews will be proactive and comprehensive, over time covering the whole of the County's urban and rural road network.

- 3.2 The programme of reviews will be carried out over a period of approximately five years ultimately covering all roads in the county. To ensure that there is a coherent area covered as part of each review we will consider, each of the market towns in the County and their surrounding hinterland, focusing first of all on those areas where the combination of frequency of collisions over the previous five years and the population and the extent of road network in the area is highest.
- 3.3 There may be occasions when it is necessary or beneficial to alter our programme, e.g. due to an emerging collision pattern or to combine the review with another road safety engineering activity, so there is a level of flexibility built into the process.
- 3.4 Similarly, it may also make sense at times to bring forward a speed limit review, to tie in with a parish or town council request. For the most part though, the expectation is that speed limit review requests will form part of the planned speed limit review timetable.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 4.1 This is currently underway with internal teams and external stakeholders. Internal teams include Public Health, Insurance and Risk, Climate change, Strategy and Performance, Highway Operations, Parking Services, Countryside Access, Parks and Grounds, Network Strategy and Major Projects.
- 4.2 In development of an SMS, the Council also recognises the importance of working in concert with its York and North Yorkshire road safety partners, including North Yorkshire Police, which has a road collision investigation remit and enforcement responsibility for speed limits. The Police also adhere to the guidance set out in Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits' and without their support, the Council would not wish to make speed limit changes. Similarly, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service attends road collisions and plays an important role in road safety education, training and publicity.
- 4.3 Therefore, external stakeholders include North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, as well as the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), City of York Council and the National Parks and AONBs.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The draft SMS is consistent with the aims and objectives of the NYC Council Plan, Climate Change Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Public Health agenda.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Essentially, the alternative would be to retain the current reactive approach to speed limit reviews, which is reliant upon parish and town council and community groups service requests. This is not considered desirable when set against the benefits of a proactive and comprehensive strategy for speed management, as set out further in the SMS itself.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council spends approximately £57M per annum on delivery of its highway's capital works programme. Alongside planned maintenance activity, this budget includes an allocation of £470K per annum for improvement works, including the speed limit reviews and subsequent pipeline of speed limit schemes. The additional capacity required to deliver the reviews as set out further in Section 12, is anticipated to be two additional engineer posts at a cost of £112K per annum, which will also be met from this allocation. .

- 7.2 In addition, schemes generated from the reviews of all speed limits, not solely 20mph schemes, will be assessed and ranked against a planned prioritisation methodology in order to ensure most effective use of the available funding. In this way, the cost implications of the proposals set out in this report are met from within existing capital service budgets, with no additional funding required or indeed, revenue pressures generated.
- 7.3 Following a Government announcement earlier this year of a new Local Transport Grant administered through the MCA, NYC submitted a successful bid, which has secured an extra £100K capital allocation for speed limit reviews and schemes in 2025/26. This funding is in addition to the amount allocated from the NYC highways capital budget.
- 7.4 Individual speed limit schemes may also be funded from other funding sources including, but not limited to, S106 contributions, Member locality budgets or via third party contributions, such as from town and parish councils.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A Local Highway Authority has a duty under s122 Road Traffic Regulation Act to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) on and off the highway.
- 8.2 A Local Highway Authority has a duty to manage the road network with a view to securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network under s16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 8.3 Traffic Regulation Orders can be made by the Highway Authority where it is expedient to do so in accordance with the statutory purposes in section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 8.4 There is a statutory process that must be followed for making Traffic Regulation Orders set out in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equalities impact arising from the recommendations of this report. It is the view of officers that the content and recommendations do not have any adverse impacts on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010 or NYC's additional agreed characteristics. The completed Equalities Impact Assessment screening form can be found in Appendix 2.
- 9.2 All individual proposals for a reduced speed limit will be subject to a full consultation exercise providing the opportunity for stakeholders to make representations on the proposal.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse impacts on climate change arising from the recommendations of this report. As lower speed limits help create the conditions for active travel, which is a key element of transport emissions reduction, the impact on the climate is considered to be beneficial. A climate change assessment has been completed and included as Appendix 3.

11.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An overarching theme associated with the SMS is a presumption in favour of introducing lower speed limits across the urban and rural road network, where there is community support and where it makes sense to do so. To that extent, the reduction in risk of injury to the road user is a stated aim of the Strategy.
- 11.2 It follows that the reduction in road user collision injury risk and the creation of a generally safer road environment, has the potential at least, to result in fewer third-party claims against NYC.

12.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Establishing a proactive approach to speed management and the creation of a pipeline of speed limit schemes will require additional resources to deliver. Following a resource planning exercise, the expectation is that the additional demand can be met from establishing two new engineer posts in the Council's Traffic Engineering Team; the costs for which are proposed to be met from the funding sources set out earlier in Section 7 of this report.
- 12.2 The speed limit review process will create a pipeline of schemes, which will in turn generate an increase in required Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). This will create a pressure on NYC Legal Services. Coincidentally, the Government has set out a timeline of April 2026 for the introduction of digital TRO (D-TRO) software nationally.
- 12.3 The anticipated benefits of D-TRO include a more streamlined TRO design, consultation and approvals process, potentially freeing up staff time and so reducing the burden that would otherwise have been created, had the D-TRO initiative not existed. At the same time, until D-TRO is actually rolled out and its impact able to be assessed, the likely benefit of its introduction remains unknown.
- 12.4 Therefore, other avenues are also being explored to reduce the impact of the increased TRO demand on Legal Services. These include undertaking an end-to-end TRO process review with the aim of Highways teams taking on more of the activities that would otherwise have been for Legal Services, including the consultation process and advertising.
- 12.5 Should the speed limit reviews be approved, any impacts will be closely monitored and further mitigation measures be considered at the time.

13.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Road safety and by extension, community safety, are key objectives on which the SMS is based, with the Strategy placing the community and its elected representatives at the heart of the decision-making process.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 To provide TEE&E O&S Committee with an opportunity to consider the draft SMS.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 15.1 For TEE&E O&S Committee to consider the draft NYC Speed Management Strategy and for any comments to inform the final version of the document, prior to it being presented to Environment Executive for approval.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – NYC Draft Speed Management Strategy

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Form

Appendix 3 – Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment Form

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02 October 2025

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