

12 July 2021

Report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services

Review of 20mph Speed Limit Policy

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (TEE O&S) with an update on the preparation of a revised 20mph Speed Limit policy.

2.0 Key Background Information

- 2.1 In November 2020, the Executive approved the TEE O&S Committee's report setting out the findings of its review of the County Council's 20mph speed limit policy and its recommendations.
- 2.2 During the course of 2021, the Traffic Engineering Team has been tasked with preparing a new policy taking into account the findings and recommendations.

3.0 Update on Recommendations

3.1 Recommendation 1

The policy should be more explicit in considering 20mph speed limits around schools and consideration given to extending the distance traditionally considered around schools in order to encourage greater use of active modes of transport.

Update

Full consideration is being given as to how this can be incorporated within the new policy. However, it remains the case that all sites must be assessed on appropriateness and the TEE O&S Committee review did indeed conclude that it was not appropriate to have a standard application e.g. outside every school or community amenity or that the extent of the limit or zone will be greater. The use and performance of that part of the highway network in terms of safety must support the need for a 20mph speed limit or zone.

- 3.1.1 Department for Transport (DfT) circular 01 13 is clear in its guidance as to the benefits that can be achieved from implementing 20 mph speed limits and zones around schools etc. The purpose of the policy is not to rewrite that, but acknowledge 20mph speed limits and zones will be considered in accordance with that document and in support of wider county council policies for healthy and sustainable travel modes.
- 3.1.2 Nevertheless, the policy will acknowledge how greater application can be applied in conjunction with the wider policy remit around modal shift to

sustainable travel options and healthier lifestyles and will also be more explicit in discussing the considerations around schools.

3.3 Recommendation 2

With reference to KSI figures, work is undertaken by the County Council's highways department to ascertain the percentage of 30mph speed limits against the percentage of 50mph or 60mph speed limits in the county.

Update

It has been arranged for the Road Casualties - North Yorkshire annual report to now include a section on the number of collisions by speed limit, showing the respective percentages.

3.4 Recommendation 3

The County Council's highways department draws up a list of high risk collision areas using three years' worth of data to examine whether an area would benefit from a 20mph speed limit, taking into account the function of the road and the road environment.

Update

The County Council's Traffic Engineering Team maintains a list of high-risk sites and routes in both urban and rural settings. This forms the basis for the annual Accident Investigation and Prevention programme of capital works – i.e. road safety engineering schemes to reduce the number and severity of collisions on the local road network.

This work will continue, and should any subsequent investigations reveal that there are locations with a history of speed related collisions that would benefit from a reduced limit, including 20mph speed limits, then such measures would be taken forward.

3.5 Recommendation 4

An examination be undertaken of the consistency of how the 20mph Speed Limit Policy is applied by each Area Highways Offices.

Update

Consideration has been given as to how the existing 20mph Speed Limit Policy (2006) has been applied by Area Teams. Substantially the policy provides a sufficiently clear steer as to the circumstances which support the implementation of speed limits and zones. It allows for the use of DfT Circular 01/13 to provide the primary guidance for engineers to determine site suitability. There is no evidence to suggest there has been inconsistent application as it sets out only advice contained in previous DfT documents. On that basis, there is no reason for any different approach to be taken by area teams or a more robust methodology built into the new policy.

3.6 Recommendation 5

A list of schools be drawn up that have a 20mph speed limit in the county.

Update

A list of schools has been drawn up and will be referenced within the policy to provide a context of number and distribution. As part of the policy, this will be kept up to date for future review and monitoring purposes.

3.7 Recommendation 6

Communications should be improved in relation to North Yorkshire County Council's Policy for 20mph Speed Limits by:

- *The document appearing as a stand-alone document on North Yorkshire County Council's Speed limits, speeding and road safety concerns webpage so that it is easier to search for and be known to members of the public;*
- *Reference to the policy inserted in the 'Safer Roads, Healthier Places, York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Strategy' and vice versa;*
- *All references to DfT Circular 01/2006 be removed and replaced with references to DfT Circular 01/2013;*
- *Making it clear that the policy does not relate to 20mph zones.*

Update

The new policy will be added to the county council website as a stand-alone document that is easily accessible.

The policy, once approved, will be referenced in the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Strategy which is currently being reviewed by the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership.

The new draft policy has replaced or updated all references to DfT and other supporting documents.

With regard to the final point of the recommendation, i.e. the policy to apply to speed limits only, not zones; officers have looked at this aspect in considerable detail and are of the view that the revised policy should still apply to both speed limits and zones, as this would provide a single comprehensive document covering all situations. There is also no difference in the assessment process.

3.8 Recommendation 7

The 95 Alive Partnership actively promotes North Yorkshire Police's 'Operation Spartan' initiative, in order to raise awareness that dash cam footage can be used to capture dangerous driving and potentially lead to a conviction.

Update

The partnership continues to promote Operation Spartan as business as usual via its website, social media and in face to face events and training.

3.9 Recommendation 8

When considering planning applications for new housing or commercial development, North Yorkshire County Council, in its capacity as the lead Highways Authority and as statutory consultee to the planning process, needs to continue to ensure it makes recommendations to local planning authorities based on written national policy indicating the appropriate best practice and guidelines for the implementation of measures. This is in order to design out speed as part of the condition of approval and to put in place infrastructure to create safe walking and cycling routes.

Update

As informed during the task group review, this is established standard practice and will continue to be the case. The County Council's Development Management Team apply the principles of Manual for Streets 2 in their assessment of applications and continue to consider ways of ensuring that appropriate designs are delivered through the planning process.

3.10 Recommendation 9

More broadly, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, for North Yorkshire County Council in partnership with a range of stakeholder interests to consider how our highways network can be used in the future to create a greener economy, taking into account the full range of road users and its use for leisure and work purposes

Update

The new policy will acknowledge its links to benefits which can be brought about through other policy and strategy commitments and provide a mechanism to allow the county council to support and deliver the implementation of new 20mph speed limits.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Work is continuing to gather and rationalise a range of information regarding existing 20mph speed limits and zones in the county and speed limits in general. In addition to this, the new policy document is nearing completion and will be the subject of a future report to the TEE O&S Committee for comments.

5.0 Recommendation(s)

- i. The Committee acknowledges the progress to date.

David Kirkpatrick – Traffic Engineering Team Leader

Name and job title of person presenting the report – David Kirkpatrick
Date 12 July 2021

Background papers relied upon in the preparation of this report:-

For further information contact the author of the report

Appendices: None