

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN (VAS) – STRENSALL ROAD  
EARSWICK**

**Summary**

1. Earswick Parish Council has raised concerns about speeding traffic in Strensall Road and has requested the installation of a VAS which they are happy to fund. This report outlines the findings of a technical assessment, summarises consultation feedback, and makes a recommendation on the requested sign being implemented.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Cabinet Member approves the installation of a vehicle activated sign in Strensall Road Earswick, as detailed in Annex B.

Reason: To improve road safety by reducing the speed of traffic entering Earswick

**Background**

3. The Earswick Parish Council have concerns about traffic speeding on Strensall Road, and wish to fund the installation of a vehicle activated sign to face traffic entering Earswick from the north (i.e. from Strensall).
4. In response Officers have carried out a technical assessment, which involved identifying an optimum site for the sign based on visibility requirements and the availability of a mains power supply. In addition speed surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the proposed sign location to check that the exiting speeds are

sufficiently high to meet the Council's criteria for VAS being introduced. The speed surveys recorded an 85<sup>th</sup>ile speed of 35 mph which meets the criteria for a VAS within a 30mph limit when funded by a Ward Committee or Parish Council.

### **Proposals**

5. Following this technical assessment, Officers considered that the best location for the proposed VAS would be on the lamp column opposite house No 235, just south of The Garden Village (see Annex A). This location has good visibility for traffic travelling from the direction of Strensall, and power for the VAS can be drawn directly from the lamp column without the need for an additional supply.
6. The sign will have a '30 mph' and 'Slow Down' message which will be displayed when approaching vehicles exceed a trigger speed of 35mph. Trigger speeds for such signs are normal defined as 10% of the posted speed limit plus 2 mph, which in the case of a 30 mph speed limit equates to 35 mph. This is also the threshold which North Yorkshire Police use in targeting speeding vehicles for enforcement, and is intended to target drivers who are exceeding the speed limit by a significant margin. The trigger level also provides a buffer to cater for a degree of inaccuracy which is known to exist in the speedometers of most cars.

### **Consultation**

7. Consultation has taken place with relevant Councillors, the Police, and residents living close to the proposals. The responses are summarised below:

### **Ward Member Views**

8. Councillor S Wiseman – supports the proposals.
9. Councillor P Doughty – supports the proposals.

### **Other Member Views**

10. Councillor A D'Agorne – supports the proposal but has asked for police enforcement to reinforce the VAS.

### **Officer comments**

11. Once a site with speeding concerns has been referred to CYC for an engineering solution North Yorkshire Police take the site off their enforcement list, particularly if there is no history of injury collisions which is the case here. This is a matter of policy agreed by a meeting of the Executive Member for City Strategy and Advisory Panel in October 2006 (updated 2011). This means that if a VAS is introduced on Strensall Road, the police will no longer carry out any speed enforcement there.
12. Councillor C Runciman – no comments were received.
13. Councillor J Alexander – no comments were received.
14. Councillor I Gillies – had no comments to make on the proposals.

### **Police Views**

15. North Yorkshire Police (NYP) have indicated that the site is currently on the enforcement list but if the VAS is installed then no enforcement will be carried out. Also its installation at this location is against DfT guidance and so cannot be supported by NYP (Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/03 states that a VAS should only be considered to address a traffic accident problem).

### **Parish Council response**

16. The Parish Council have been made aware of the NYP position on future speed enforcement and have confirmed that they still wish to proceed with the installation of the sign.

### **Officer comments**

17. The purpose of a VAS is to warn motorists that they are exceeding the speed limit and to take appropriate action to reduce their speed. As such the VAS is intended to be self enforcing and should not require any police intervention. City of York Council policy on the use of VAS states that a VAS can be used as a speed

management tool and not just for casualty reduction. Whilst this goes against DfT guidelines it was considered by EMAP in October 2006 and the decision was made that the use of VAS in York should not be restricted to those locations where there is a casualty record.

### **Resident Views**

18. One resident was concerned that the original location of the proposed sign would be visible from their bay window and would be distracting and asked if it could be moved to another location.

### **Officer comments**

19. Another suitable location for the sign would be directly opposite the junction with The Garden Village (see Annex B). Therefore some further local consultation on the alternative position was carried out. Initially another resident objected to the new location, but after discussing their concerns with officers is now happy with the revised proposal.

### **Options**

20. The Cabinet Member has three basic options to consider:

Option One – approve the installation of a VAS in Strensall Road, as per officers’ original proposal (see Annex A).

Option Two - approve the installation of a VAS in Strensall Road, as per officers’ revised proposal (see Annex B).

Option Three – note the contents of the report, but decide that a VAS should not be introduced.

### **Analysis of Options**

21. There is evidence of speeding traffic entering the village. Therefore any attempt to reduce speeds must be beneficial and reduce the risk of speed related injury collisions. It is considered that the location of the VAS shown in Annex B is the best one available after taking residents’ concerns into consideration. Doing nothing will not address the concerns of the Parish Council.

## Council Plan

22. The only potential implication for the priorities in the Council Plan is:

Build strong communities – There could be benefits for the community in having the speed of traffic through the village reduced.

### Implications

23. This report has the following implications:

- **Financial** – the supply, installation and maintenance of the VAS is being funded by the Parish Council (£2600) so there is no financial implication for CYC. The VAS comes with a 5 year warranty against breakdown but after that it will be the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain the sign.
- **Parish Council Response** – The Parish Council have been made aware of the financial implications of the maintenance of the sign and are happy to proceed with installation.
- **Human Resources** – None.
- **Equalities** – The reduced speed of traffic through the village is likely to have benefits for the mobility and visually impaired crossing Strensall Road in particular.
- **Legal** – None.
- **Crime and Disorder** – The reduced speed of traffic is likely to result in less speeding offences.
- **Information Technology** – None.
- **Land** – None.
- **Other** – None.

## Risk Management

24. There is a small risk that the presence of a VAS might cause drivers to increase their speed to deliberately set it off, however, there is no evidence that this has been a problem elsewhere so the risk is considered minimal. Also studies of the effectiveness of VAS have indicated that they are particularly effective in reducing the number of drivers who exceed the speed limit.
25. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at less than 6 (see table below). This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a significant threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/ Reputation	Insignificant	Unlikely	3

### Contact Details

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 19 November  
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### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

**Wards Affected:** Strensall

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report.**

## **Background Papers:**

### **Annexes**

Annex A Proposed Vehicle Activated Sign - Strensall Road Earswick

Annex B Revised Proposal for Vehicle Activated Sign - Strensall Road,  
Earswick