

Report of the Director of City Strategy

20 mph city wide speed limits

Summary

1. This report has been prepared at the request of the Shadow Executive to respond to a number of specific queries raised regarding the potential for the implementation of a city wide 20 mph speed limit along the lines of the Portsmouth city council scheme.

Background

2. This report notes the criteria that were used in Portsmouth to implement a city wide scheme, whether such a scheme could be introduced in York and how it fits with current policy on addressing speed issues in the city.

Portsmouth City Council Scheme

3. Portsmouth City Council has implemented city wide 20 mph speed limits on almost all its residential streets. The scheme was prepared as a result of a road safety initiative to reduce accidents (paragraph 13), consideration of the traffic management and safety schemes already identified in the work programme as well as concerns/requests for lower speeds made by residents. The scheme has been designed to reduce speeds and create a culture where driving too fast in residential areas is seen as anti-social. The scheme has taken two years to set up and complete and was completed in two phases. The scheme covers 410 km of residential roads, approximately 1200 roads. In addition a further 300 roads are traffic calmed (See annex one). In York almost 130 traffic calming schemes have been implemented, approximately 280 roads (comparable to Portsmouth) and 570km of road are currently signed as 30mph or below.

Inclusion of Roads

4. Where the speed limit is lowered to 20mph, as opposed to creating a 20mph zone, the Local Authority is allowed to control speeds by signs alone. To do this it is necessary that the 85th percentile or average existing speeds are close to 20mph. The roads included in the Portsmouth scheme had average

speeds of 18 - 24mph. Where roads did not comply with these criteria they are not included as part of the scheme. The council has advised that separate consultation will be carried out at a later date to find out if residents want traffic calming.

5. It was decided that the 20mph speed limit was only suitable for roads where there is dense housing, usually with cars parking on both sides of the roads, and which do not form part of the trunk road network. In some cases roads which are either very short or cul-de-sacs have not been included. This is because existing speeds are already slow and to include them in the 20mph limit would mean putting up unnecessary signs, which would add to unnecessary street clutter. Speeds in these roads will be monitored to ensure they stay low, and if necessary they could be included at a later date.

Scheme Set Up

6. Data collection commenced in 2006 with speed surveys being carried out on all residential roads and took a year to complete. The city was divided into six areas and delivery of the scheme was divided into two phases. Three areas were signed as phase one during 2006/2007 (north east, central west and south east), phase two was delivered in 2007/2008 (north west, central east and south west).

Signing and Enforcement

7. Signing is necessary to alert drivers that they are entering a 20mph area. This has been done using signs at the junctions where the speed limit changes. It is also necessary to remind drivers of the speed limit and this has been done by erecting small (300mm) diameter repeater signs at regular intervals.
8. Portsmouth City Council advised that research had shown that by reducing the speed limit alone with repeater signs as a reminder the average speeds are reduced by 3-4mph. For this reason it does not expect that extensive enforcement will be needed and that the scheme will be self-enforcing. No other traffic calming measures are proposed as part of the scheme and the Police are not proposing to carry out routine enforcement of the scheme. However, the council has advised residents that where it is found that there are specific and persistent non-compliance issues in some of the roads then the Police will make spot checks and issue speeding fines to offenders and that consideration could be given to whether traffic calming would be appropriate.
9. An officer has been seconded to the scheme through the consultant framework agreement on a part-time basis to respond to complaints, liaise with the Police, arrange replacement signs and carry out further monitoring.

Consultation

10. A six-month period of consultation with residents was also conducted prior to the scheme being implemented and a favorable response was received to the proposed scheme. Additional consultation carried out with residents after the implementation of phase one revealed that public reaction and observance to the scheme around schools was positive; within their own streets reaction was also good but reaction to 20mph on other residential streets was not so well

received or observed. No specific consultation has been carried out with businesses as the scheme has only included residential roads.

Scheme Outcome

11. The full scheme implementation was completed in March 2008. Portsmouth City Council made a decision not to carry out monitoring of the outcomes of the scheme until phase two had been completed. Monitoring of speed will commence in summer 2008, monitoring of the impact on accidents will commence once the completed scheme has been in place for one year. It is, therefore, not possible to give an indication of how successful the scheme has been either in reducing casualties or speed nor is it possible to provide any information as to how many roads will subsequently be the subject of requests for traffic calming.

Scheme Funding

12. The city council budget for implementing the scheme in six zones over two years is £475,000. It has been funded through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). There is some allowance in this budget for any traffic calming works that may be appropriate at a later date but the extent of any works is not yet known.

Casualties

13. The baseline and target number of Killed and Seriously injured (KSIs) in Portsmouth is broadly similar to that found in York, although the child KSI and slight casualties are higher. The table below provides a comparison between Portsmouth and York

	1994/98 baseline average	2006	2007	2010 target
Portsmouth total KSI	142	93	79	85
York total KSI	137	160	93	75
Portsmouth Child KSI	25	15	18	12
York Child KSI	14	12	4	7
Portsmouth slight	1012	784	709	889
York slight	697	591	580	627

Consultation

14. None – this report is for information only.

Options

15. Option one – The Council introduce a 20mph limit on residential roads across the city on a similar basis to the Portsmouth city council model. This could be based on a review of the speed management plan map that was developed in 1997 to help develop a framework for implementing traffic measures on different road categories. The current categories are: traffic routes, where no vertical traffic calming measures are implemented; mixed routes, where targeted traffic measures could be introduced at specific locations and residential routes, where if it was appropriate vertical traffic calming measures could be introduced.
16. Option two – The Council introduce a smaller scale scheme based on targeted residential roads with schools, shops or other services where these roads meet the criteria, i.e. average speed is 24 mph or less.
17. Option three – The Council continues to consider speed issues as part of its existing speed management plan process where priority is given as set out in the table below. Under the current policy measures required for category 1 and 2 take priority for funding within the capital programme.

Category	Speed	Casualties	Priority	Treatment
1	High	High	Very High	Speed Management measures
2	Low	High	High	Casualty Reduction Measures
3	High	Low	Medium	Speed Management Measures
4	Low	Low	Low	None

18. Option Four – That the Council reviews the potential for 20 mph speed limits across the city when the outcome of the Portsmouth scheme has been assessed and made public and until the outcome of the Portsmouth scheme is known to continue to deal with speed issues under its current policy (as option three above).

Analysis

19. Option one – The introduction of a city wide scheme would provide a consistent means of responding to requests and complaints about speed on residential roads. It would support other policy areas, such as walking and

cycling, by promoting low vehicular speed routes across the city addressing actual and perceived safety as well as make roads more useable for those that live on them. This is an important policy issue that has wider impact than purely casualty reduction. It would be a relatively low cost means of addressing speed when compared to 20 mph zones where traffic calming would be required as part of the scheme.

20. It would however be relatively high cost (possibly around the same cost as Portsmouth, although cost estimates have not been carried out) to address what are currently medium and low priority issues. It would not address speed issues on non-residential roads, where a significant proportion of casualties in York occur, in particular at junctions where clusters of accidents often occur. In addition it would not conform to the current policy in terms of capital expenditure targeted at specific high casualty sites.
21. During the last three years (2005 – 2007) there have been an average of 53 KSI casualties per year on unclassified roads within York and 328 slight casualties (unclassified roads have been used as a proxy as it has not been possible to interrogate the database to exclude roads with speed limits of 40 mph and above). The figures will therefore include casualties occurring at junctions with classified roads and unclassified roads with speed limits over 30 mph. This compares to an average of 118 KSIs and 608 slights on all roads in York during the same period. The result of the Portsmouth scheme against casualty reduction has yet to be monitored and it is not yet clear whether city wide 20 mph speed limits are effective at reducing casualties. Total casualty figures on residential roads prior to scheme implementation (2004-2006) are; total KSIs 58 and slights 550, both of which are lower than in York. These figures only include 20mph and 30 mpg roads, unlike the York figures.
22. Speed data is not available for all residential roads in York as speed surveys are carried out as a result of requests or complaints and the surveys are generally prioritised to locations where there is a recognised accident problem. However, of the 24 speed surveys that were undertaken as part of the six monthly speed management review (EMAP January 2008) five sites had average speeds of 24 mph or less and would fit within a 'Portsmouth' type scheme. Of the 24 sites, one has a 60 mph speed limit, one has a of 40 mph speed limit, 17 have a 30 mph speed limit and five currently have a 20 mph speed limit. This sample suggests that there might be fewer residential roads that would meet the criteria than is the case in Portsmouth, i.e. removing the 60mph and 40mph roads from the above sample, only 22% of the remaining surveyed roads would meet the criteria.
23. It would be possible to implement a scheme in York similar to that introduced in Portsmouth. It would have a wider impact than purely casualty reduction and support other policy areas such as cycling. A 3-4 mph speed reduction is a significant percentage decrease on low speed roads that would benefit pedestrians and cyclists. However, such a scheme is not designed to reduce speeds on roads where the average speed is above 24 mph and as result would not tackle a significant percentage of the roads that are currently the subject of complaint and request. Given that the figures in paragraph 21 for

KSIs also include casualties occurring at junctions with classified roads the introduction of a city-wide 20mph speed limit is likely to result in a less significant reduction than is at first apparent. From the recent sample of roads where speed surveys have been carried out any scheme that was introduced in York would be on a smaller scale as the number of roads meeting the average speed criteria appears to be lower. Traffic calming would be required on other roads where the average speed limit is currently over 24 mph which would increase the cost of implementation.

24. Option two – As option one except that there would be two processes for responding to requests and complaints regarding speed and the cost of introducing the scheme would be lower.
25. Option three – This would continue to address the highest casualty/speed related sites (predominantly the outer ring road and local distributor roads which could not be included in a 20 mph limit scheme) in a systematic way. The council is currently not on track to meet its 2010 Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) target of a 45% reduction over the 1994/8 baseline. Capital funding would continue to be prioritised against casualties.
26. Option four – Does not discount a Portsmouth type scheme being introduced within York and allows a decision to be made in the future based on evidence. The continuation of Option three ensures that speed issues continue to be dealt with in a structured way.

Corporate Priorities

27. The actions described could meet the council's priorities to:
 - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of travel
 - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest
 - Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city

Implications

28. None – the report is for information only.

Risk Management

29. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Recommendations

30. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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Report Approved

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

EMAP Report 14th January 2008 Six monthly Review of Speeding Issues

Annexes

Annex one – Portsmouth city wide 20 mph scheme (As this map is in colour, it is only available on the council's website or on request)