



Meeting: Transport Working Party

Date: 31st January 2013

Wards Affected: All wards in Torbay

Report Title: Strategy for 20mph limits outside schools

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Road Safety Initiatives Report 2012-2013 proposed that an ongoing programme of 20mph zones outside schools be developed and which will be based around a policy which will be presented for consideration by members at a future meeting of the Transport Working Party.
- 1.2 A recommendation is being sought from the Working Party that the Torbay draft strategy for 20mph zones outside schools is adopted to set the priorities for a programme of implementation.

2. Proposed Decision

- 2.1 That members approve the draft strategy for the implementation of 20mph zones outside schools, following which a further report will be presented to a future meeting of the working party, at which time a list of proposed sites will be put forward for implementation.

3. Action Needed

- 3.1 The proposed strategy requires approval from the Transport Working Party in order that a priority list of proposed schemes may be prepared before being returned to a future meeting for permission to implement.

4. Summary

- 4.1 Speed significantly increases the chance of being injured in a collision and the implementation of the proposed strategy of 20mph limits outside schools, will help to reduce vehicle speeds. There is clear evidence of the effect of reducing traffic speeds on the reduction of collisions and casualties, as collision frequency is less at lower speeds; and where collisions do occur, there is a lower risk of fatal injury.

Supporting Information

5. Position

5.1 The Road Safety Initiatives Report 2012-2013 (Appendix 3 proposed schemes for 2012-2013) proposed that an ongoing programme of 20mph zones outside schools be developed and which will be based around a member approved strategy. The Department for Transport (Dft) has announced its intention to revise and reissue 'circular 01/06, Setting Local Speed Limits', with the aim of increasing the flexibility for local authorities to set speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest the speed limit should differ from the respective national speed limit.

The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 states that in order to improve Road Safety for residents, new 20mph zones will continue to be implemented on quiet residential side streets and around schools where necessary. The aim is to make side roads with low levels of traffic and high numbers of vulnerable road users, set at a 20mph limit as standard across Torbay, similar to areas where this has already been trialed, for example Portsmouth.

5.2 In residential areas where there are likely to be young children, pedestrians and cyclists (e.g. around school entrances) and a risk of injuries to vulnerable road users, it is believed a scheme to reduce vehicle speeds to a maximum of 20mph is the best compromise between mobility / risk and is likely to gain community support.

5.3 Whilst there are many potential outcomes of a 20mph scheme that can be measured (i.e. a reduction in collision rates and vehicle speeds) it is also important to highlight the possibility of increased walking and cycling (and their associated health benefits), quality of life, community and well being.

5.4 There may often be a miss-match between what communities expect and the effects the reduction in speed limit is likely to achieve and therefore we would choose to accompany the introduction of schemes with publicity and education.

5.5 It should be noted that there is a major difference between 20mph zones and 20mph limits, which can be defined as follows:

- **20mph zones**

Require traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps, chicanes) or repeater speed limit signing and/or roundel road markings at regular intervals, so that no point within a zone is more than 50m from such a feature. In addition, the beginning and end of a zone is indicated by a terminal sign. Zones usually cover a number of roads.

- **20mph limits**

These are signed with terminal and at least one repeater sign, and do not require traffic calming. 20 mph limits are similar to other local speed limits and normally apply to individual or small numbers of roads but are increasingly being applied to larger areas.

- **Variable 20 mph limits**

The authority have powers to introduce 20 mph speed limits that apply only at certain times of day. These variable limits may be particularly relevant where for example a school is located on a road that is not suitable for a full-time 20 mph zone or limit, for example a major through road. To indicate these limits, variable message signs are available. To reduce costs and sign clutter, the DfT will consider authorising the placing of a single variable message sign on the approaching traffic lane (rather than signs on both sides of the road) on a case by case basis.

The Secretary of State has provided a special authorisation for every English traffic authority to place an advisory part-time 20mph limit sign, with flashing school warning lights. This can be a more cost-effective solution than variable electronic signing and reduces the requirement for signing.

- 5.6 Successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits are generally self-enforcing, i.e. the existing conditions of the road together with measures such as traffic calming or signing, publicity and information as part of the scheme, lead to a mean traffic speed compliant with the speed limit. To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed.
- 5.7 A comprehensive and early consultation of all those who may be affected by the introduction of a 20 mph scheme is an essential part of the implementation process. This needs to include local residents, the police and emergency services and any other relevant local groups.
- 5.8 It is important to consider the full range of options and their benefits (both with regard to road safety and the wider community and environmental benefits and costs), before making a decision as to the most appropriate method of introducing a 20 mph scheme, to meet the local objectives and the road conditions.

This process is as outlined in **Appendix 1** – Draft flow chart for the provision of 20mph school zones.

The strategy proposes that:

- If the posted speed limit is above 30mph, a 20mph limit will not be implemented.
- From speeds readings if the 85th percentile speed (i.e. the speed at which the majority of drivers are happy to travel at) is above 35mph and there is not a school crossing patrol at the site, a 20mph limit will not be implemented.
- On roads where the 85th percentile speed is below 35mph average speed readings will be taken at school times and this will determine if we will consider the implementation of either a permanent or variable 20mph limit.

6. **Possibilities and Options**

6.1 That the proposed draft strategy for 20mph zones outside schools is not recommended.

7. **Preferred Solution/Option**

7.1 That members approve the draft strategy for the implementation of 20mph zones outside schools, following which a further report will be presented to a future meeting of the Transport Working Party, at which time a list of proposed sites will be put forward for implementation.

8. **Consultation**

8.1 The police have been consulted on the flow chart included in Appendix 1.

8.2 Once a list of proposed sites has been identified and approved by the members of the Transport Working Party, consultation will be undertaken with interested parties, as per 5.7 above on the individual sites.

9. **Risks**

9.1 **Outline of significant key risks**

9.1.1 If 20mph school zones are not implemented, then this may have a detrimental effect to both road safety and the promotion of sustainable transport options during the period of the school run.

9.2 **Remaining risks**

9.2.1 If the 20mph school zones are implemented, there may be detrimental impacts to other highway users in some sections.

9.2.2 If the 20mph school zones are implemented, this may generate more requests for similar zones away from schools.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft flow chart for the strategy of the provision of 20mph school zones.

Additional Information:

None.

Documents available in Members' Rooms:

None.

Background Papers:

Road Safety Initiatives Report 2012–2013 Appendix 3 Proposed schemes for 2012-2013

DfT 'Consultation on revision of DfT's Speed Limit Circular' 1st October 2012

DfT 'Circular 01/06 Setting Local Speed Limits'

The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2011-2026