

REPORT TO CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2014

REPORT ON: 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 273-2014

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Committee with background information on the implications of introducing widespread 20 mph speed limits on the city's residential roads.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no direct funding implications associated with this report; however, any extensive introduction of 20 mph limits within the city would have very significant capital and revenue costs for the Council. The actual costs could only be accurately determined once all areas in the city had been examined in detail to determine the exact physical requirements and financial implications.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 It is acknowledged that there is societal pressure to introduce widespread 20mph speed limits throughout the residential areas within urban areas. While the introduction of 20 mph limits are commendable in certain circumstances where they can improve safety and encourage more sustainable modes of transport, there are many practical issues that have to be considered prior to implementation and the overall cost/benefit has to be considered objectively with good evidence.

3.2 The Council already has a well established policy relating to 20mph speed limits and this is detailed in Committee Report 286-2003 (article III of the City Development Committee 28 April 2003 refers) and it also relates to Scottish Government guidance on 20mph speed limits. The policy of the Council is to prioritise pedestrian accident injury sites for analysis and treatment prior to any consideration of further 20mph sites. This policy essentially targets the Council's limited resources to locations where injury accidents are actually occurring, rather than installing traffic calming on roads where there is no injury accident history.

3.3 Current Council policy is that there are three main ways to implement 20 mph limits:

- **20 mph zones** : these must be self enforcing using engineering measures, ie road humps chicanes, etc, to ensure speeds are less than 20mph or less.
- **Mandatory 20 mph speed limits** : usually indicated by terminal and repeater signs alone, and legally enforceable by the Police.
- **Advisory 20 mph speed limits** : usually indicated by terminal signs and roundel road markings alone. Cannot be enforced by the police and relies on the support of local residents/drivers.

3.4 This policy has directly assisted the Council to reduce road injury accidents and exceed the National 2010 Road Accident Targets that were set down by government. The Council are currently progressing well towards the 2020 targets and, therefore, roads in Dundee are presently significantly safer to travel on than they were 15 to 20 years ago. The current policy has reduced injury accidents in the city and has been very successful.

3.5 The guidance indicates that the introduction of 20mph speed limits would require substantial traffic calming and engineering measures to be implemented to help ensure that 20mph limits are self enforcing and would not call on additional police resources. On a city wide basis, the

introduction of 20mph limits would incur large sums of capital and in many areas it would provide little benefit in injury accident reduction as accident levels are already low.

- 3.6 The relevant Scottish Government guidance is contained in Circular No 6-2001 which requires that 20mph limits (zones, mandatory and advisory) meet the following criteria;
- 20 mph zones should be a self contained residential area that covers several roads and has distinct 'natural' boundaries;
 - A significant accident history should be evident;
 - Average speed after introduction of speed reducing engineering measures should be 20 mph or less;
 - Emergency services must approve scheme;
 - No part of a 20mph zone should be more than 1km from any boundary road and an alternative route should be available; and
 - They should be prioritised alongside other traffic calming sites.
- 3.7 The Council do promote 20mph limits when appropriate and has recently introduced a 20 mph limit on Lothian Crescent and surrounding streets as part of the redevelopment of the Whitfield area. This demonstrates that the council do implement 20mph speed limits when opportunities arise within other major capital projects. The scarcity of resources at present make it difficult to introduce 20mph limits widespread throughout the city as signage alone will not reduce vehicle speed to the appropriate 20mph speed limits. The signage also adds to an already cluttered streetscape which can be visually intrusive and costly to maintain.
- 3.8 The current temporary 20 mph speed limits outside schools are quite separate from the subject of this report. Measures are, however, underway to seek Government support to extend the geographical coverage of these speed limits where this can be sufficiently justified.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 'Mandatory' 20 mph limits (through signage only) should not be introduced in Dundee as Police Scotland could not guarantee police enforcement beyond known injury accident locations and, therefore, these limits could quickly fall into disrepute as drivers would ignore the new limits. There is evidence in the city already that a reduction of speed limit (through signage only) has little impact on overall vehicle speeds.
- 4.2 'Advisory' 20 mph speed limits are not enforceable and instead rely on community self enforcement. Evidence has shown that these would only reduce speeds by about 1 mph and have little effect on overall accident reduction. The Council should not divert resources from other Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) reducing projects in order to pursue this option.
- 4.3 Therefore, 20mph limits should only be implemented in residential roads in the city where physical traffic calming can be introduced. This would ensure that the new limits are self enforcing and that actual speeds are reduced significantly. Any such implementation would have to be undertaken in a phased manner over a number of years due to the significant overall level of financial resources required. This is likely to be several million pounds given that the length of the unclassified road network in the city is approximately 400 km.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Scottish Executive Circular 06/2001

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/159194/0043312.pdf>

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