

## **SPEED MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP**

**6th October, 2011**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson, Harman, L. Hughes and Long.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Coultas and Richmond.

**OFFICERS** – Dave Winstanley, Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects, Steve Petch, Lead Officer for Place Scrutiny and Karen Graves, Democratic Support Officer.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Mr. Matthew Snedker, representing 20's Campaign and Kendra Ullyart, Friends of the Earth.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To set Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Review Group and to hear the views of the 20's Plenty Campaign.

### **Points Discussed and Considered -**

- Members considered the Terms of Reference for this piece of work which was to seek a range of views as to the impact of 20 mph speed limits within the Borough. The Group agreed the intended outcome, areas to be considered and relevant people and organisations it wished to consult with in order to conduct the review thoroughly.
- Mr. M. Snedker, 20's Plenty Campaign and Miss Ullyart, Darlington Friends of the Earth attended the meeting from 10.15am and Members gave consideration to a PowerPoint Presentation given by Mr. Snedker on the focus of the Campaign which was to introduce a 20mph speed limit in residential areas within the Borough of Darlington.
- The presentation was divided into several areas which included, Setting the Scene; Acknowledging that there was a problem; setting the Darlington context; looking for solutions; financial and social dividends; moral imperative; legislative framework, conclusions and next steps.
- The use and location of additional signage and/or alternative methods of enforcing the 20mph speed limit was discussed together with the financial implications of signage provision. Other ways of reducing speed limits included narrowing of roads, demarcation, build-outs and tapering.
- The Group was informed that the Campaign believed that driving became more effective in slow-moving traffic and that as more people became aware of the campaign it gathered strength and support.
- Questions were raised as to the enforcement of new speed limits and the financial implications to Local Authorities that this brought.
- Reference was made to the Department for Transport changing its guidance following an audit undertaken on Portsmouth after the introduction of 20 mph speed limits and the effect of speed cameras on the behaviour of motorists.

- Discussions followed on the recent government announcement to investigate raising the maximum speed limit to 80mph and whether the two issues were linked.
- Members questioned the lowering of speed limits on only arterial and feeder roads when many major roads were residential and were advised that Friends of the Earth had a vision that the whole of Darlington would be 20mph thereby reducing 'rat runs' on the whole of the network.
- Other Local Authorities in the North East which currently supported 20mph were Newcastle and Middlesbrough and the Group stated that lessons could be learnt from those Authorities in co-ordinating an approach to 20mph.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the thanks of this Group be extended to Mr. Snedker for his informative presentation.

(b) That Councillor Long approach Newcastle and/or Middlesbrough Council to ascertain how they implemented 20mph and the difficulties they encountered.

(c) That representatives of Durham Police Constabulary be invited to the address this Group to give their views on 20mph within the Borough.

(d) That members of this Group establish the views of schools within their Wards on the topic of 20mph speed limit on the Borough's roads.

(e) That the Group seek the view of relevant Officers in Transport Policy and Highway management to provide their views on positive and negative impacts of Total 20 and understand the principles of speed management around the Borough.

(f) That the Group aims to complete this Review in February, 2012.

## **SPEED MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP**

**17th November, 2011**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes, Long and E.A. Richmond.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Coultas and Wright.

**OFFICERS** – Steve Petch, Lead Officer for Place Scrutiny and Karen Graves, Democratic Support Officer.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – M. Straugheir, representing Durham Constabulary, T. Stevens and J. Morgan, representing Arriva.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To hear the views of Durham Constabulary and Arriva with regard to speed management within the Borough.

The Chair invited everybody to introduce themselves and outline their role within the Group prior to giving details of the remit of the Group. Attendees were also advised that the Group had recently seen a presentation by the 20's Plenty Campaign and invited Durham Constabulary and Arriva to put forward their views on Speed Management within the Borough.

### **Points Discussed and Considered -**

- Mr. Straugheir advised the Group that he had been in post as Traffic Management Officer with Durham Constabulary for eleven years and that it was laid down in the Government's 2006 Regulations how to adhere to traffic calming and speed limits.
- The Group were advised that speeds were generally low enough within the Borough to be able to maintain 20 mph without the need for traffic calming measures and the layout of new housing developments did not encourage speeds above 20 mph.
- Mr. Straugheir was of the opinion that 20's Plenty wanted large areas of the Borough, including arterial roads, to be limited to 20 mph without the need for traffic calming measures, however he advised the Group that if the roads had no traffic calming measures the Police would not be prepared to enforce.
- Mr. Straugheir gave examples of where speeds had been increased from 30 mph to 40 mph in an attempt to successfully slow traffic – prior to raising the limit the average speed was 55mph.
- Members questioned the suitability of various roads including Whessoe Road and Brinkburn Road for 20 mph speed limits; were advised that car parking on certain roads was actually acting as natural traffic calming; and that newly-installed pedestrian crossing points were not always recognised as crossings by drivers.
- It was confirmed to the Group that it was possible to have a 20 mph speed without the need for infrastructure and that drivers needed to be educated to ensure a change of attitude. An example given on change of attitude and education was that during 1960/early 1970 it was considered socially acceptable to drink and drive.

- Reference was made to the recent government announcement to consider raising the motorway speed limit to 80 mph at the same time as reducing urban speed limits to 20 mph. Mr. Straugheir advised the Group that the Association of Police Officers (ACPO) policy was not to enforce 20 mph as it should be sustainable, however Community Speed Watch could be utilised in 20 mph zones and if excessive speeds were recorded then the Highway Authority could be advised that the speed limit was not correct for that area. In all circumstances a full regard had to be made to safety.
- Mr. Straugheir was of the opinion that 20 mph across the Borough was unworkable, however although not National Policy, some Authorities did impose total 20 mph speed limits.
- The Group felt that school traffic was naturally traffic-calmed due to the volume of cars around schools during drop off and pick up times.
- The Group discussed the issue of perception regarding speed limits. Mr. Straugheir advised that in many instances people's perception of speed was inaccurate. He referred to a speed check of 2000 vehicles undertaken on the A167 at Harrowgate Hill where a 40 mph speed limit was enforced. Of the 2000 vehicles checked only 3 letters had to be despatched to speeding drivers.
- Mr. Stevens agreed and informed the Group that following complaints of buses speeding in Priestgate, Arriva purchased a speed gun. The fastest bus was found to be travelling at 19 mph. People's perception of the speed of a bus was incorrect; buses are large, with diesel engines, noisy and difficult to accelerate at speed.
- Arriva also advised that they regularly monitor drivers speed and respond to complaints and will discipline speeding drivers if appropriate. Any driver convicted of speeding have to pay their own fine, inform the insurance company and advise, in writing, VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) which is linked to all insurance companies and can check drivers.
- Discussion ensued on the practicalities of driving at 20 mph and Mr. Stevens asked if there were plans to trial 20 mph within the Borough as this would have a 'knock on' effect on all bus timetables as traffic would be slowed down. The Group were advised that because of traffic increases Arriva now had to allow 18 minutes journey time from Harrowgate Hill to the Town Centre as opposed to 12 minutes three years ago. It was stated that if a bus was to get slower people may decide to use their own car.
- Mr. Stevens suggested the Group could look at having a pilot scheme in certain areas of Town although any scheme would need to have the correct infrastructure in place.
- As Newcastle and Middlesbrough operate 20 mph zones the Group asked if Arriva were able to get feedback from colleagues on the impact of 20 mph speed limits and whether there was an impact on the formula used to determine a bus timetable. The Group also enquired whether it would be possible for Mr. Straugheir to provide a copy of the ACPO Policy in relation to 20 mph speed limits.
- The Group questioned the impact of 20 mph on Road Haulage Companies and Street Scene in delivering services.

- References were made to the amount of cars in households; success of Park and Ride Schemes in Durham and York; and the perception of people that as more traffic was on the road there were more accidents, however Darlington's road safety statistics would suggest that this is not the case.

**IT WAS AGREED –**

- (a) That the thanks of this Group be extended to Mr. Straugheir, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Morgan for their views on speed management.
- (b) That figures regarding Darlington's Accident Statistics be provided to the Group.
- (c) That the Group aims to complete this Review in February, 2012.

## **SPEED MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP**

**14th December, 2011**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Baldwin, Carson, Harman, Lawton, Long and E.A. Richmond.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Cossins.

**OFFICERS** – Dave Winstanley, Assistant Director Highways, Design and Projects; Andrew Casey, Head of Highway Network Management; Steve Petch, Lead Officer for Place Scrutiny and Karen Graves, Democratic Support Officer.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor Kelly.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To hear the views of the Council Officers with regard to speed management within the Borough of Darlington.

The Chair advised that the Group had recently seen a presentation by the 20's Plenty Campaign, heard the views of Durham Constabulary and Arriva and that Officers had been invited to put forward their views on Speed Management within the Borough.

Officers circulated three plans which detailed existing and proposed 20mph zones within the Borough, the Borough locations of accidents during the past three years and a detailed plan of Town Centre accidents over the past three years.

### **Points Discussed and Considered -**

- The Group were advised that Darlington Borough Council (DBC) were the Traffic Authority and responsible for setting local speed limits.
- The Group were advised that the current 20mph zones were designed on the guidance relevant at the time and prioritised based on accident analysis and locations of schools and some introduced to deter rat-running. The zones were allocated to cover as large an area as possible with the finance available with DBC trying to encourage a culture of driving at 20mph within residential roads.
- Several Group members had visited Officers at Middlesbrough Council where 20mph zones were proposed in residential areas however new DfT guidance had been produced which affected provision of signage.
- Officers stated that their preference for repeater features based on the new directions would be small signs on lampposts against roundels (road surface markings) as this type of feature would not be seen in poor weather conditions.
- Driver behaviour was discussed and there was recognition that some drivers would not slow down for traffic calming features and/or signs. The majority of drivers who are predominantly residents do respect lower speeds in residential areas.

- Officers advised that driving at 20mph in residential areas was comfortable. However this could be uncomfortable on on arterial roads at certain times of the day and can lead to frustrations by certain drivers and temptation to perform unsafe overtaking manoeuvres in the urban area.
- Community Speed Watch is a partnership approach to tackle residents concerns over speed. Residents are involved in surveying speeds with the Police and if the recorded speeds raise concern either individual letters are sent to drivers or further enforcement undertaken.
- Officers advised that there were many variables to consider when implementing 20mph zones with one solution not fitting all circumstances and that the two issues to consider were reduce speed or manage speed.
- Whilst considering the accident statistics for the Borough over a three year period, Members considered the type of accident, the location, the classification of a serious accident and the data that could be collected to highlight potential problem areas.
- If potential problems were highlighted consideration could then be given to possible solutions which can include Engineering, Education, Enforcement or Encouragement.
- Traffic calming had been prioritised in areas with traffic accidents but accidents do still happen. Accidents are not always speed related. However, reducing speeds does reduce the potential severity. Some of the more deprived Wards in the Borough have received 20mph or traffic calming treatment to reduce risk where there are likely to be more vulnerable road users present.
- Reference was made to DBC road accident statistics and the Group was advised that DBC had achieved the Governments 2010 targets. In the 10 year period KSI accidents had reduced by 42%, Child KSI reduced by 80% and Slight Casualties reduced by 33% on all age groups and 49% on Child age groups. Officers advised that they were keen to progress 20 mph where required with schools a priority. Police Data was analysed monthly to identify specific problem or cluster areas although there was currently nothing being highlighted that warrants individual investigation
- Officers reiterated the current budget constraints within the Council and advised they could only undertake limited works in the forthcoming years with the reductions in Capital from the Local Transport Plan. The new Directions issued on signing and lining in 20mphs zones would give greater flexibility and reduce the need for physical traffic calming but not remove the need. The designers would have greater flexibility to tailor solutions to individual circumstances.
- The Group considered the provision of signage to advise visitors they were entering a 'safe town' and to watch their speed although accidents on arterial routes were very low.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the thanks of this Group be extended to Mr. Winstanley and Mr. Casey for their views on speed management.

(b) That the Officers be congratulated on accident reduction within the Borough.

(c) That a promotional campaign be undertaken to encourage the public to keep accident statistics low.

(d) That Darlington Borough Council continues to provide 20 mph zones on a prioritised basis within the current budget constraints.