

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 10th November 2015
Report of: Steph Cordon, Head of Communities
Subject/Title: School 20mph Zones – Delivery Programme
Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Brown, Highways

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The 2015 National Highways and Transport survey of Cheshire East residents has again placed road safety as a top priority. The Council continues to promote the safe use of our roads by all road users with these efforts being recognised by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport for our achievements on the A537 which has seen a significant reduction in the number of serious crashes following the introduction of engineering measures.
- 1.2 Cheshire East residents frequently voice their concerns regarding road safety in the vicinity of schools, in particular parking issues and speed of vehicles. The Council carried out a local community road safety consultation between February 24 and March 16 this year, with a view to using this feedback to develop an initial local community road safety programme and help formulate a forward plan for road safety. A significant number of responses received related to speeding outside schools.
- 1.3 In Britain, annually around 700 children are killed or seriously injured and approximately 5000 children suffer minor injuries in accidents occurring between 7:30 and 8:59am or between 3:00 and 4:59pm on a school day. It should be noted that these are not necessarily outside schools.
- 1.4 Evidence shows that decreased traffic speeds reduce the frequency and severity of collisions. For pedestrians involved in a crash, the speed at which they are hit is critical:

Collision Speed	Chance of being Killed	Chance of survival
20 mph	1 in 40	97%
30 mph	1 in 5	80%
35 mph	1 in 2	50%
40 mph	9 in 10	10%

- 1.5 Safety and speeding is often a perceived problem, with temporary high parking levels often regulating the traffic flow at drop off and pick up times.

- 1.6 The 160 schools within Cheshire East include state KeyStage 1-4, independent, special needs schools and academies. Currently 5 are within a mandatory 20mph limit, 10 in a 40mph or national speed limit and the remainder within 30mph limits.
- 1.7 This paper has been developed to outline a proposed three year programme for the implementation of advisory 20mph zones outside all Cheshire East schools. It is considered that working in partnership with schools, Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and local communities is likely to deliver the most successful outcomes, improving customer satisfaction with the highway service.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet support the proposed 3 year programme, running from 15/16 to 17/18, for the introduction of advisory 20mph zones outside all schools in the Borough.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits' was issued in January 2013. 20mph limits and zones are now available for highway authorities to introduce where there are (or could be) significant numbers of pedestrians or cyclists, and where this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic.
- 3.2 Guidance from the DfT and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is that 20mph limits and 20mph zones should be self-enforcing, using suitable signing and traffic calming where required.
- 3.3 It is essential that the Council and Cheshire Constabulary work together from an early stage when determining any changes to speed limits. In order to ensure changes in speed limit deliver the desired effect for the local communities, it is vital that any changes do not place unrealistic reliance upon police enforcement.
- 3.4 A full range of options has been considered for 20mph zones including:
 - Mandatory 20mph speed limits;
 - Experimental Mandatory Speed Limits;
 - Mandatory Variable Speed Limits; and
 - Advisory 20mph zones at peak times.
- 3.5 Consultation processes for mandatory speed limits would have a significant administrative element and would require a legal process and objection period. Experimental limits will defer but not remove the administrative burden. DfT formal approval is required for signing variable speed limits in addition to the consultation, legal and objection processes. The proposed advisory limits can be installed without formal consultation and are deliverable in the short/medium term subject to funding.

3.6 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 (Appendix C). This is a more cost-effective solution than variable electronic signing and reduces the requirement for signing.

3.7 The proposed programme as set out in Appendix B provides the most efficient and best value approach in terms of scheme delivery.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All Wards are affected by the proposal.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All Ward Members are affected by the proposal.

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 The decision will have an influence on the service contribution to the delivery of the Cheshire East Council Three Year Plan outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Our local communities are strong and supportive
- Outcome 4: Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place to live

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1. The programme will be delivered through a mixture of existing resources, supplemented with additional capital funding in years 2 & 3; this will be the subject of a capital business planning proposal, for inclusion in the medium term financial strategy.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The process of changing speed limits pursuant to the delivery programme proposed here will require statutory processes to be followed. Those will be followed as and when the proposals contained here are brought forward.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The implementation of advisory 20mph school zone may have detrimental impacts to other highway users, particularly where the schools are located on the principal road network with higher speed limits. However this needs to be balanced against both road safety and the promotion of more sustainable transport options during the period of the school opening/closing times.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 Currently there are 160 schools sites in the Cheshire East area, of which 23 sites already benefit from the provision of either a mandatory or advisory 20mph speed limit (Appendix A).

- 10.2 A three year programme has been produced for the introduction of advisory 20mph speed limits at the remaining school sites within Cheshire East and is set out in Appendix B.
- 10.3 Year One sites include all those for which one or more of the following conditions apply:
- The current speed limit is 30mph;
 - There are existing complaints relating to vehicle speeds;
 - A speed limit can be introduced which can incorporate more than one school; due to the close proximity of the individual sites; and
 - There are already flashing amber warning lights located on the road adjacent to the school site.
- 10.4 Year Two sites include all those for which one or more of the following conditions apply:
- The current speed limit is 30 or 40mph; and
 - There are no flashing amber warning lights located on the road adjacent to the school site.
- 10.5 Year Three sites include all those for which one or more of the following conditions apply:
- The current speed limit is above 40mph; and
 - There are no flashing amber warning lights located on the road adjacent to the school site.
- 10.6 The majority of sites in year one can be delivered by changing signs on existing posts which already have flashing amber units. The new signs are approved by the Department for Transport for use on the public highway and as such can be erected on site without the need for a lengthy application and approval period. Where schools are located within close proximity these sites will be combined within the same speed limit. This approach has the benefit of being able to deliver a large number of sites within a short timescale in the first year, at an estimated
- 10.7 Those sites included in year two and three of the programme are more complex than the year one sites, for example they will require new posts and power supplies and therefore require a longer design period. Due to the short timescale associated with the design stage of the year one sites it will be possible to start the design stage of the year two sites in the first year of the programme. The estimated cost for the second year of the programme is £316,000 and £380,000 for the third year.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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