

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting:	16 November 2021
Report Title:	Speed Management Strategy
Report of:	Andrew Ross, Director of Highways and Infrastructure
Report Reference No:	HT/14/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** The draft Speed Management Strategy (The Strategy) sets out a consistent approach which the council will take to managing speed on the highway network.
- 1.2.** The report recommends that due to the high level of community interest in the issue of speed management and its relationship to safety and active travel that in line with good practice the Strategy should be subject to a consultation process.
- 1.3.** The current 2016 document successfully implemented a framework against which speed limits could be assessed and introduced. The Strategy builds on both the approach of the 2016 document and the very important partnerships with the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Cheshire Road Safety Group, who are key to delivering the Strategy.
- 1.4.** The Strategy introduces an approach to speed management focused on Education, Enforcement and Engineering (3 E's) and sets out a hierarchy of tools that the council has available to manage speed on the highway network and also sets out how and when they will be applied. This will be the basis on which the council will respond to the many requests in relation to speed management and speed limit compliance that are received each year.

- 1.5. The report recommends that the Strategy is published for consultation purposes and a further report comes back to this committee on the outcome of the consultation prior to formal adoption of the Strategy.
- 1.6. The Strategy will contribute to the council's priority of a transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1. Approve the publication of the Strategy for an 8 week consultation process.
 - 2.1.2. Note that a report on the outcome of the consultation process and seeking approval of the adoption of an updated Speed Management Strategy will be presented to this Committee.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. It is important that the council has an up-to-date strategy for the management of speed on the highway network that takes account of all current policies and guidance.
- 3.2. The current document was adopted in 2016 and since then there have been a number of legal and national guidance changes which have been included in this update, including:
 - The development of a highway network hierarchy following guidance in Well Managed Highway Infrastructure 'A Code of Practice', which takes into consideration current and expected road use along with local economic and social factors.
 - Revision to the National Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions in 2016, which allowed highway authorities further discretion relating to the placement of certain traffic signs.
 - Updated legislation on air quality.
- 3.3. Consultation on the Strategy will help to shape the document and get buy in from our key partners, stakeholders and local communities.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. To not update the Strategy would mean an opportunity to build on our approach to speed management with our partner organisations, such as those involved with the Cheshire Road Safety Group (CRSG), would be missed. This Strategy covers the whole process of speed management not just speed limits and helps to deliver wider goals of the Council and CRSG.

5. Background and Detail

- 5.1.** The key changes between the Strategy and the previous 2016 version are as follows:
- The setting out of a clear hierarchical approach to speed management via the “3 E’s” (Education, Enforcement and Engineering).
 - A new section, on design and the potential measures required to change driver behaviour if education and enforcement are not working (and funding is available).
 - A guide to help identify which areas may be suitable for 20mph limits.
 - Guidance on the introduction of advisory and enforceable 20mph limits. Clarification of the role of Cheshire Police and CRSG.
 - Incorporation of a section on Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and clarification of the relationship between mean speed and 85th percentile speed.
 - Clarification of where exemptions to the strict application of the Strategy will apply.
- 5.2.** The Strategy describes how the 3 E’s will be used as steps or gateways before entering into the next step and how each step will be applied in Cheshire East.
- 5.3.** The setting of speed limits is a sub-process in the overall Speed Management Strategy. It is an issue which draws particular community attention. The Council needs to have a consistent approach to the application of speed limits so that they are understood and complied with by the majority of drivers. The Strategy therefore deals with principles that will be applied when setting speed limits.
- 5.4.** The Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2013 “Setting Local Speed Limits” provides guidance to local highway authorities on setting speed limits, the Cheshire East Strategy sets out a framework of requirements for different limits and a process for implementing them to ensure that a consistent approach to setting speed limits in line with national guidance is followed across the Borough. The Strategy also provides information on the measures which can be used to support speed limits including traffic calming measures, camera technology and the role of education, training, publicity and enforcement and in doing so helps set out what might need to be considered to support speed limit compliance.
- 5.5.** An important factor in shaping the Strategy is the adoption of Cheshire East’s Local Transport Plan in 2019 which placed much greater emphasis on the consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

- 5.6.** In late 2016 the UK Roads Liaison Group released Well Managed Highway Infrastructure and as a result the Council have developed a Network Hierarchy which takes account of the varying functions and uses of its roads and considers whether they are primarily focussed on vehicle or people movement. This can help identify locations which may be suitable for the application of a revised speed limit.
- 5.7.** We know from experience that in Cheshire East where the wrong limits are applied they are generally ignored. This means that safety is compromised by drivers failing to comply as walkers and cyclists may be given a false sense of security. Therefore, it is important that we follow a considered approach using design to encourage self-compliance where possible. This is also the key principle in national guidance (DfT Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits).
- 5.8.** The Strategy has a core principle of ensuring that the speed limit for any road is appropriate and in keeping with its environment.
- 5.9.** The strategy includes a framework which sets out criteria for setting different speed limits. This follows guidance given in DfT Circular 01/13 setting out the types of environment which may be appropriate for different limits and applies this to the Cheshire East context giving consideration to the use of the network hierarchy.
- 5.10.** The DfT guidance states that existing mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits and the framework sets out the speed ranges appropriate for different limits. Technical guidance on the measurement of speed limits is given in the appendices.
- 5.11.** The Strategy recognises the importance of encouraging active travel (cycling and walking) in our towns and villages in line with the current Local Transport Plan.
- 5.12.** The Strategy provides a means of identifying areas suitable for 20mph limits using the movement framework, a consideration of the local road environment and existing speed measurements.
- 5.13.** The Strategy also outlines when advisory 20mph outside schools may be appropriate.
- 5.14.** The Strategy also proposes that where the physical design of any new residential developments naturally encourage motorists to drive at 20mph or less there is no need to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order for that speed limit. The Strategy also identifies physical engineering measures which have the potential to significantly change vehicle speed.
- 5.15.** The role of technology such as informational Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) to help manage speed is covered in the Strategy. They can have a role in modifying behaviour on 20 - 40mph roads in some circumstances. The document sets out a range of locational criteria which need to be followed to ensure that the devices operate effectively and safely.

- 5.16.** Camera technology, which is used at appropriate sites reduces the number of highway deaths and injuries by enforcing speed limits and reducing red light running. The role of the Cheshire Road Safety Group in funding and identifying such sites is covered in the Strategy.
- 5.17.** The document also outlines the role of the Cheshire Fire and Rescue service in delivering a range of educational programmes and targeted publicity campaigns for road users on behalf of the Council and finally, the draft document describes the role of the police in speed enforcement and the process to be followed with requests for changing speed limits, including the role of the Speed Management Group in checking the requests against the framework.
- 5.18.** In 2018 the council introduced the Cheshire East Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2018-23 (AQAP) to address its obligations under the Local Air Quality Management Framework. Currently Cheshire East has a number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). A key element of the AQAP is to improved air quality through traffic management. The Strategy allows for changes to speed limits to help improve air quality in AQMAs.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1.** Consulting the below identified stakeholders on key issues within the Strategy should help to deliver the outcomes of the Brighter Futures Together Programme.
- 6.1.** The intention is to undertake a Public Consultation as soon as practicable following approval being given; this is currently expected to be from 22/11/21.
- 6.2** An 8 week consultation period is proposed which accounts for an expected prolonged Christmas holiday period.
- 6.3** The plan is to engage with the following key stakeholders alongside the public:
- Members
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - Emergency Services
 - Cycling Groups
 - Schools
 - Cheshire Road Safety Group
 - Bus Operators
 - Road Haulage Association
 - AA
 - RAC

 - Internal Departments – Planning, Highways, Development Management, Passenger Transport and Air Quality

- 6.4** An online questionnaire with a background information page will be set up. The questionnaire and background information is being developed with input from members of the Council's Research and Consultation Team. The questionnaire will have a link from the council's consultation webpage.
- 6.5** A dedicated email address will be set up to communicate with key stakeholders this will allow responses and comments to be submitted.
- 6.6** A press statement is to be prepared to advertise the launch of the consultation period to encourage participation.
- 6.7** Social media will be used throughout the consultation period to ensure the profile is maintained.
- 6.8** The Strategy has been socialised with Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue and relevant internal departments ahead of this committee and the proposed consultation. This exercise was conducted to ensure the viability of the proposals. Further detailed comments will be sought from these groups as part of the proposed consultation.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1** Whilst there is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change or amend Council Strategies, the Council are under an obligation to ensure that they consider stakeholders and the public view as they expect a fair process to have been followed and that any decision made has been done in a transparent way; by allowing a consultation process to take place the council will be complying with this obligation and ensuring that the consultation process is a fair one.
- 7.1.2** Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the consultation will need to be considered when the Highways and Transport Committee makes any future decisions on the Strategy.

7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1** The development work and consultation are being funded through existing highway revenue budgets. The application of the updated Strategy will also be funded through the existing highway budgets. The schemes identified would be managed through a prioritisation process to ensure existing highway budgets aren't exceeded.

7.3 Policy

7.3.1 The outcome of this consultation will be used to influence and shape the future Strategy.

7.4 Equality

7.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed, Appendix B, which identified there are benefits for vulnerable road users, i.e. pedestrians and cyclists. This complies with the duty of the Council to have due regard to the Equality objectives set out in the Equality Act 2010.

7.5 Human Resources

7.5.1 There are no human resource implications.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 Completing a public consultation will help shape the Strategy reducing the risk of the Council being seen as non-transparent.

7.7 Rural Communities

7.7.1 There are no rural communities impacts.

7.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1 There are no children and young people/cared for children impacts.

7.9 Public Health

7.9.1 Effective speed management has the potential to improve population health and wellbeing by improving road safety and decreasing traffic accidents, while also reducing vehicle emissions that contribute to poor air quality and climate change. The Public Health department will engage with the developing strategy as part of the consultation process.

7.10 Climate Change

7.10.1 The document to be consulted on seeks to improve AQMAs by identifying them as exceptions to the strict application of the Strategy where this would have a positive benefit on air quality.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Appendix A Draft Speed Management Strategy Appendix B EIA
Background Papers:	Current Speed Management Strategy 2016