

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**Public Question Sheet**

<p><b>HWBB Date:</b></p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> November 2017</p>	<p><b>Member of the Public:</b></p> <p>Professor John Whitelegg LLB</p>
<p><b>Question (s):</b></p> <p>Given that 20mph is recommended by a large number of prestigious health organisations eg the World Health Organisation, NICE and ADPH and Shropshire is officially designated by Public Health England as "worse than the England average for road deaths and serious injuries" I think all H&amp;WB members would wish to discuss 20 mph and then decide whether or not to accept World Health Organisation advice and if not why not.</p>	
<p><b>HWBB Response:</b></p> <p>Shropshire Council is very much focussed on Road safety and recognises it's an important issue for all of Shropshire's resident and visitors to the county. There is of course a shared responsibility for promoting safety on our highways. There is a role for each of us as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers as well as the role local and national government play to promote safe systems. Shropshire Council recognises that the scheme known as "20s Plenty" offers one approach to promoting road safety and indeed 20 mph zones exist in some parts of the County. Shropshire Council also recognises that this model focuses on urban communities whereas Shropshire is a predominantly rural area.</p> <p>It has been suggested that Shropshire Council should adopt a "20s Plenty" policy across all its urban areas, however such an approach will not address the major road safety concern locally, that is serious accidents on rural roads. The data available over several years indicates that most serious accidents, including those that resulted in a death, were on our rural roads. Many of these accidents involve a single vehicle and its occupants, with no other people involved. Accidents on rural roads were generally of a more serious nature than those on urban roads. In view of this pattern there appears to be a limited basis for adopting a universal "20s Plenty" across our towns and villages. That said Shropshire Council is willing to work with communities where there is strong support for creating a 20 mph zone. Where such a scheme was to be adopted Shropshire Council would not be in favour of introducing measures such as "speed humps" as there appears to be mixed evidence of their effectiveness in reducing the speed of vehicles.</p>	

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Shropshire, we currently have an agreed approach for dealing with 20mph speed restrictions which is embedded in our Road Safety Policy. Our approach is based upon supporting the delivery of appropriate and achievable traffic management interventions in locations where the potential benefits are greatest and where specific concerns have been identified. The 20s Plenty campaign looks to make 20mph the default speed limit on residential and urban streets, so adopts a more area wide approach.

Requests for 20mph speed restrictions are currently dealt with as *community led concerns* within the Road Safety Policy and as such must have the support of the Shropshire Council local member, the town or parish council, West Mercia Police and the local Shropshire Council traffic engineer if they are to be recommended for inclusion in future programmes of work.

The Road Safety Policy puts an emphasis on determining the appropriate type of intervention on a site by site basis. A 20mph speed restriction is one of a range of traffic management options available, depending upon local circumstances. There are a number of factors that we need to consider in relation to 20mph speed restriction requests such as whether a 20mph speed limit is the most suitable measure to address a defined problem, whether it will have a measurable and positive speed reducing effect and whether there are any alternatives that could better address a community's concerns.

In Shropshire 20mph speed restrictions are typically only considered outside schools or where there are high numbers of vulnerable road users; on urban residential streets in specific cases (where wide community support can be demonstrated, where there is evidence that streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles and where the characteristics of the street are suitable) and, on town centre streets or pedestrian dominated areas.

There are two ways in which a 20mph speed restriction can be implemented: a 20 mph speed limit or a 20mph zone. 20mph speed limits are signed only and do not require traffic calming but do need repeater signs. DfT evidence suggests that these typically only lead to small reductions in vehicle speeds. In order to implement a signed only limit, a mean vehicle speed of 24mph or less must be achieved over a number of roads.

A 20mph zone however requires either traffic calming or signs at frequent intervals. At least one traffic calming feature must be placed in a zone, however distributor roads can be signed only where traffic calming is not suitable. DfT evidence suggests that zones are more effective in reducing vehicle speeds.

In both cases, there is a presumption that vehicle speeds are already low and that 20mph speed restricted areas are self-enforcing. The DfT's guidance "Setting Local Speed Limits" (2013) clearly states that to achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity. West Mercia Police do not currently enforce 20mph speed limits; therefore in Shropshire general compliance needs to be achievable without reliance on enforcement.

At the current time we consider that the implementation of signed only 20mph speed limits on large numbers of residential roads that already have low vehicle speeds, as advocated by the 20s Plenty Campaign, will have implications in terms of cost of implementation, additional sign clutter and the future maintenance burden of the local highway authority whilst having a

limited positive effect on existing vehicle speeds. Where there is a perception that vehicle speeds are not low enough, this inevitably puts a burden on the highway authority to address this.

In adopting an approach to implement area wide 20mph speed restrictions on residential roads, we must manage the public's expectations on what can be achieved on roads that do **not** satisfy the DfT's requirement for low vehicle speeds prior to the introduction of either approach. The concept of introducing self-enforcing speed limits and zones may, in a number of circumstances, require supporting engineering measures to encourage compliance and correspondingly the costs of implementation can increase significantly. It is important that we recognise the potential future financial demands for installing and maintaining costly traffic calming measures. Where physical measures are deemed necessary to make a speed limit effective such schemes would have to be prioritised for funding and would be dependent on sufficient budget being available.

The nature and function of residential roads in Shropshire can vary considerably and consequently what is realistic and appropriate in terms of traffic management can vary also. For this reason, our Road Safety policy enables town and parish councils to highlight areas of specific concern and for our traffic engineers to consider the most appropriate remedial measure, which in some cases may be a 20mph speed restriction.

Whilst the valid points regarding the positive relationship between 20mph speed restrictions and public health, road accident severity, quality of life and community benefits are recognised, with limited available funding we need to ensure that we can not only afford to implement appropriate highway measures but also that we can deal with the potential legacies arising from them.

#### Other comments:

20 mph Speed Limit will be part of the work programme for the Place Overview Committee and is likely to be on the agenda for its first meeting in the New Year. The agenda's for the committee meetings will be published 8 days before the meeting date, and there is the opportunity for members of the public to ask a question to be responded to at the meeting.