



<u>Committee and date</u> Communities Overview Committee	<u>Item</u>
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## PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED RESTRICTIONS PROGRAMME FOR SHROPSHIRE SCHOOLS

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### 1 Summary

In December 2019, Shropshire Council passed a motion to support the principle of a 20mph speed limit outside all schools in the county and requested officers to bring a report to Council within six months to consider how this could be implemented. Due to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, this report was deferred until September 2020. Shropshire Council subsequently approved the development of a programme for introducing 20mph speed restrictions outside schools, where existing highway conditions suggest it would be appropriate to do so.

There is no single generic approach for the introduction of a mandatory 20mph speed restriction, and site-specific characteristics determine the level of intervention that may be required and the degree of benefit that may be achieved. In some circumstances this may be physical traffic calming to slow vehicle speeds, and in others, current conditions may suggest that a 20mph speed restriction is unnecessary and would deliver minimal benefits.

The Council resolved to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure to undertake the necessary investigations and develop a programme of design and works to implement 20mph speed restrictions outside schools, where considered appropriate. This work was to be carried out in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Highways and Transport and Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services and reported to the Communities Overview Committee. Therefore, this report provides a summary of the data collection and feasibility work that has been carried out as well as the approaches taken for communications and programme development.

### 2 Recommendations

That the Communities Overview Committee:

- Consider the approach that has been taken to determine the feasibility of introducing a 20mph speed restriction outside individual schools.
- Consider the prioritisation approach used to inform the forward programme of design and implementation.
- Consider the further development of an approach for communicating with schools and associated Shropshire Council Local Members where a mandatory 20mph speed restriction will not be introduced.
- Consider the approach for the ongoing review and introduction of enforceable parking measures outside schools.

### **3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

#### **3.1 Opportunities**

An appraisal of opportunities associated with this project was carried out as part of the report to Council in September 2020. Following completion of the feasibility work, the following opportunities are highlighted:

- The approach allows for the selection of measures that are appropriate for the local highway environment, rather than a blanket approach.
- The approach can demonstrate a targeted assignment of limited funding to sites where the potential benefits to users are greatest.
- The proposed approach for amending any parking restrictions is based upon collaborative works programming and presents an efficient use of resource.

#### **3.2 Risks**

An appraisal of risks associated with this project was carried out as part of the report to Council in September 2020. Following completion of the feasibility work, the following risks are highlighted:

- The provisional programme has not been communicated outside of highways team pending this review of the approach taken. There is a reputation risk associated with perceived lack of progress and the limited ability of officers to provide updates to Shropshire Council Members and school communities on progress in response to enquiries.
- The ability to spend the provisionally allocated capital funds is directly dependent on the identification staff resource to manage ongoing consultation and scheme delivery (see Section 4). There is not currently capacity within the directly employed Highways and Transport staff to cover this. Skills shortages in the industry have meant that identification of an appropriate individual has not yet been possible.
- Further delay to commencing the ongoing programme of design and delivery will negatively impact on Shropshire Council's third-party partners' ability to programme and resource work within the original programme timescales.
- Statutory consultation associated with the introduction of mandatory speed or parking restrictions may result in lack of support to progress in some locations causing delay to delivery.
- This project has focussed primarily on vehicle speeds outside schools only and may not address other concerns or initiatives associated with pupils' journey to and from school.
- Where schools already have low vehicle speeds and the benefits of introducing a 20mph speed restriction are limited, perceived risk may result in some Members, schools or local councils being disappointed with the outcomes of this work.
- In some locations local artwork associated with previous advisory 20mph speed restrictions may need to be removed leading to possible poor publicity.

#### **3.3 Equalities**

An ESIA was produced as part of the report to Council in September 2020.

### **3.4 Community, consultation and engagement**

The following communication and engagement activities have been carried out since the project commenced in May 2021:

- All Local Members, town / parish councils and schools informed of surveys in their area and proposal and asked to let the team know of any potential influencing factors.
- Circulation of a briefing note to schools on the surveys and how they could get involved, use the data etc.
- Designated e-mail set up for enquiries.
- Web page developed with links to all key information regarding surveys and the project (see references).
- A further update to school leaders on next project stages in March 2022.
- The Portfolio Holders for Highways and Transport and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education have been briefed throughout the project and most recently in May 2022.

A dedicated programme delivery manager will carry out more detailed engagement with school leaders and communities on specific proposals and all schemes will be subject to a statutory consultation exercise.

Shropshire Council's newly appointed interim School Travel Plan advisor will engage with schools, regardless of whether a 20mph restriction is proposed, on other opportunities to promote road safety education and sustainable travel to school (see Section 6).

### **3.5 Environmental**

A climate change appraisal was carried out as part of the report to Council in September 2020.

## **4 Financial Implications**

Shropshire Council revenue funding was identified in 2021/22 to carry out a programme of data collection and feasibility work with a view to formulating a provisional programme of capital work to commence from April 2022, in line with the programme presented in the September 2020 report to the Council. This feasibility element of the project was completed to time and budget. The commission associated with this work cost £84,564 . £34,737, was subsequently capitalised against the 2021/22 Integrated Transport capital grant.

The forward programme of design and works associated with specific 20mph interventions outside schools will be funded from the Integrated Transport Capital Grant. This grant is 100% externally funded by the Department for Transport and is not augmented by Shropshire Council. The approved report to Council in 2020 presented the following potential financial profile, depending upon the scale of interventions, and on this basis £500,000 has provisionally been allocated in the 2022/23 Integrated Transport capital programme to commence delivery of this programme of work. The Council has acknowledged (2020) that resources will be diverted from other streams of work typically funded through the Integrated Transport programme to support this initiative.

The ongoing maintenance of any new highway assets associated with this project will be funded from highways revenue allocations.

**Table 1: Potential financial profile for delivery**

Potential level of intervention	Funding by financial year ('000s)					
	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29
Minimum traffic calming	£500	£500	£500	£145	-	-
Maximum traffic calming	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£225

The potential to use some of the allocated capital budget to fund a dedicated programme delivery manager for this project has been agreed in principle with the Finance Business Partner. This role will be responsible for managing the ongoing design and delivery of the schemes as well as engaging more closely with the relevant school leaders, Shropshire Council Local Members and town and parish councils. This role will also act as a single point of contact for any project enquiries. The ability to spend the allocated funds is directly dependent on recruitment to this post, which, due to skills shortages in the industry, has not been possible to date.

## 5 Background

The programme of data collection and feasibility work associated with the introduction of mandatory 20mph speed restrictions commenced in May 2021 with a view to formulating a provisional programme of capital work to commence in 2022/23.

### Project governance

The feasibility work and programme development has been led by the Highway Policy and Strategy Manager with the former Head of Transport and the Environment acting as Project Director. A working group was set up following approval to proceed in September 2020 which has met routinely during the feasibility work and includes representatives from the Education department as well as the corporate finance, communications and traffic engineering teams.

### Data collection

A significant programme of data collection has been carried out at all state funded maintained schools and academies that do not currently have a mandatory 20mph speed limit. In some cases, this has included multiple sites at schools. Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) have been used to collect data on traffic flow, traffic speeds and vehicle type over seven days, 24 hours a day. This data has been used specifically to understand traffic behaviour at the start and end of the school day.

In addition, a range of additional data has been reviewed including existing road characteristics and the local environment, parking restrictions, reported personal injury accidents and modal choice for the journey to school.

### Option assignment

The data collected for each school has been reviewed and a preliminary level of intervention in relation to the introduction of a mandatory 20mph speed restriction has been assigned to each site. This could be either a signed only 20mph speed restriction, a variable 20mph speed restriction or a 20mph speed restriction with additional speed reduction measures. In some locations, where current highway conditions already promote low vehicle speeds at school times the recommendation may be to not introduce a 20mph speed restriction on the basis that it would not offer a defined improvement on current traffic conditions.

The outcomes of the initial feasibility work suggest that 107 out of 179 highway sites reviewed outside schools already promote low vehicle speeds at school start and end times

with no further speed reducing interventions required. 42 sites meet the DfT guidance for signed only 20mph speed restrictions and the remainder would require either a variable 20mph speed restriction or additional traffic calming.

In all cases the aim has been to identify appropriate speed reduction measures that will deliver the greatest benefits to the school community, local residents, other highway users and the local environment. Further information on the different options and how they have been assigned is contained in Appendix A.

An outline design palette has been developed to ensure that appropriate materials are selected that demonstrate best value in terms of whole life cost, reflect road function, minimise street clutter, take account of historic and natural environments, and are consistent.

The primary focus of the project is speed reduction at school times in line with the original Council motion, however any other factors that could be reasonably addressed alongside a 20mph scheme will be considered as scheme design progresses. This will be explored further through direct engagement with schools as scheme design progresses and will be dependent on budget availability.

### **Programme development**

A simple prioritisation framework has been developed based on the estimated benefit per pupil for a proposed scheme. The prioritisation approach, alongside other intelligence (i.e. co-ordination with other planned activities), has been used to inform the development of a provisional forward design programme and works programme commencing in 2022/23 at the highest priority sites.

Larger scale schemes will require more design work. In these cases, design and construction are not undertaken in the same financial year. Signed only speed limits can be delivered more quickly, typically within a year, where no formal objections are received as part of the statutory consultation process that will be required for all schemes.

### **Parking regulations**

Shropshire Council approved (2020) a recommendation to review parking behaviour and existing traffic regulations near schools and, where appropriate, introduce new enforceable parking measures to complement the introduction of a 20mph speed restriction, as part of programmed work.

In many cases, this would involve ensuring that any school 'keep clear' yellow zig-zag markings comply with the requirements for the introduction of an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order. Where an amendment to lining is required, the most effective way to do this is after carriageway maintenance work. Work is ongoing to establish opportunities to amend any existing parking restrictions as part of planned highway maintenance or other planned carriageway resurfacing work.

## **6 Conclusions**

The data collection and feasibility work that has been carried out, as well as the approach taken for communications, option allocation and programme development, provides a transparent and defensible approach to decision making meaning that:

- Appropriate levels of intervention are taken forward that reflect local highway conditions,
- Limited funding is spent on the right things in the right locations, and

- Programme delivery will be prioritised based on where the potential benefits are greatest.

The work carried out has also facilitated the development of a provisional forward programme of planned design and construction work that can be proactively communicated following this review by the Communities Overview Committee and approval by the Assistant Director of Infrastructure.

The next steps will be as follows:

- To identify staff resource for the ongoing management and delivery of the 20mph speed restrictions outside schools programme and associated engagement activities. Design work will then be commissioned on the first batch of schemes.
- To develop a communications approach for schools where an 20mph speed restriction will not be implemented that focuses on the existing positive behaviour in relation to vehicle speeds and offers information on additional initiatives that they may wish to progress such as road safety education and sustainable travel.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Department for Transport (2013) *Circular 01/2013 "Setting Local Speed Limits*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits> (Accessed: 20-06-2022).

Shropshire Council (2021) *20mph speed restrictions outside Shropshire Schools*. Available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/plans-policies-strategies-reports-and-schemes/20mph-speed-restrictions-outside-shropshire-schools/> (Accessed: 20-06-2022)

Shropshire Council (2020) *Report to Council, 24th September 2020: Proposed 20mph speed restrictions / school streets programme for Shropshire Schools*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s25448/Full%20council%20report%2020mph%20Schools%20-%20September%202020%20FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 20-06-2022).

Shropshire Council (2013) *Technical Guidance Note 1/13: 20mph speed restrictions*. [Online]. Available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/Data/Decision%20Making%20Session%20by%20Portfolio%20Holder%20for%20Highways%20and%20Transport/20131220/Agenda/1A%20Appendix%20A%20Technical%20guidance%2020mph.pdf> (Accessed: 20-06-2022).

**Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)**

Cllr Dean Carroll  
Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight  
Cllr Cecilia Motley  
Cllr Ian Nellins

**Local Member**

This report relates to a proposed County wide strategy.  
The Local Members' Protocol is contained at Page E45 of the Constitution.

**Appendices**

Appendix A: 20mph options and assignment

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There are two main ways in which a 20mph speed restriction can be implemented: a 20mph speed limit or a 20mph zone.

20mph speed limits are signed only and do not require traffic calming but do need repeater signs. 20mph limits are like other local speed limits and normally apply to individual or small numbers of roads. DfT evidence suggests that these limits typically only lead to small reductions in vehicle speeds. To implement a signed only limit, a mean vehicle speed of 24mph or less must be achieved.

A 20mph zone requires either traffic calming or signs at frequent intervals. At least one traffic calming feature must be placed in a zone. DfT evidence suggests that 20mph zones are more effective in reducing vehicle speeds than 20mph speed limits. Traffic calming involves the installation of specific physical measures to encourage lower traffic speeds. Some examples may be speed tables, central islands, road narrowing's or chicanes.

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. Therefore, in Shropshire general compliance needs to be achievable without reliance on enforcement.

The concept of introducing self-enforcing speed limits and zones may, in several circumstances, require supporting engineering measures to encourage compliance and correspondingly the costs of implementation can increase significantly.

In addition to the approaches outlined above, the highway authority is now able to introduce 20mph speed limits that apply only at certain times of day. Shropshire currently has one such system in place in Minsterley.

This project has assigned one of four main options for the introduction of mandatory 20mph speed restrictions outside schools:

<b>Option 1. No further action</b>	Current highway conditions already promote low vehicle speeds at school times and a 20mph speed restriction would not offer defined improvements on the current conditions or the school is not on the public highway.
<b>Option 2. Signed only 20mph speed limit</b>	Recorded vehicle speeds sit within the DfT's recommended threshold for a 20mph speed restriction without additional traffic calming.
<b>Option 3. Variable 20mph speed limit</b>	Current highway conditions suggest that a 20mph speed restriction that operates at school start and end times only would be most appropriate.
<b>Option 4. 20mph speed restriction with additional speed reduction measures</b>	Recorded vehicle speeds suggest that additional speed reduction measures are required to promote general compliance.

Interventions have been assigned through two sifts:

**Sift 1** Based upon average recorded vehicle speeds at school start and end times and DfT guidance on the application of 20mph speed restrictions to determine between Option 1, Option 2 or progress to Sift 2:

Less than 20mph	—————→	Option 1. No further action
20 – 24mph	—————→	Option 2. Signed only 20mph speed limit
Great than 24mph	—————→	Sift 2

**Sift 2** Range of criteria used to determine assignment of Option 3 or Option 4 (AM peak two-way speed and flow data, road type / function, road environment, existing highway features etc.)