



Committee and date
Environment and Services
Scrutiny Committee

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Item

6

Public

Petition for a 20mph speed restriction on New Street, Shrewsbury

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is intended to provide background information to the Environment and Services Scrutiny committee in response to a petition received by Shropshire Council calling for a 20mph speed restriction on New Street in Shrewsbury (between the junction with Copthorne Road and the Boat House public house).
- 1.2. Shropshire Council has a framework for dealing with road safety concerns raised by members of the public which is embedded in the Road Safety Policy adopted in March 2013. In addition, Shropshire Council also has an agreed approach for considering 20mph speed restrictions in Shropshire.
- 1.3. The Road Safety Policy was designed to take on road safety concerns not specific requests, enabling Shropshire Council to determine the most appropriate level and type of intervention using the expertise that it has access to.
- 1.4. An assessment for a community led concern in 2014 determined no further action. An assessment for a 2015 submission has not yet been carried out.

2. Recommendations

The recommendation of this report is that the Scrutiny Committee support:

- a. The procedure for dealing with community led concerns about speed and safety management.
- b. The guiding principles of where Shropshire Council would consider 20mph speed limits.

REPORT

3. Road Safety Policy

- 3.1. One objective of the Road Safety Policy is to overcome community concerns regarding traffic speeds, according to the function, nature and use of the road (to deal with perception of danger if considered appropriate).
- 3.2. In dealing with community led concerns, Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy enables town and parish councils to take a primary role in filtering road safety concerns generated by the local community. Members of the general public are encouraged to approach town and parish councils directly with any road safety concerns. Town and parish councils accept these concerns first and then submit those that they support (and consider there to be a level of shared community concern) to Shropshire Council. Town and parish councils can make submissions to Shropshire Council three times each year and they are encouraged to prioritise those in concerns in order of importance.
- 3.3. Shropshire Council does not look to town and parish councils to submit desired solutions; just communication of road safety concerns i.e. issues affecting vehicle, pedestrian or cyclist safety. Traffic engineers then use expertise and a toolkit of possible measures to determine the best, and most appropriate, measure to mitigate concerns. This may not always be a speed restriction. Further information on defining an appropriate scheme is contained later in this briefing note.
- 3.4. Community led concerns 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 put forward for prioritisation.

4. Prioritisation

- 4.1. Where the necessary support is evident, potential schemes are subject to a county wide prioritisation process to secure the necessary funding to undertake preliminary design and investigation work. On an annual basis, area teams across the county review the recommendations for schemes put forward and score them against a range of indicators that are embedded within the objectives of Shropshire Council's Community Strategy and Local Transport Plan. These are briefly outlined in the following table:

Table 1: Prioritisation themes and indicators

Theme	Indicators
Accessibility	Degree of benefit for vulnerable road users
	Is the scheme part of a wider network plan?
Network management and modal shift	Will a scheme have strategic traffic benefits?
	Potential to reduce the impact of transport on the local environment and communities
	Potential for modal shift
Economy and environment	Will the scheme support economic growth?
	Potential to reduce carbon emissions or have other environmental benefits
Local support	Is the concern identified in the Parish / Town's Place Plan?
	Does the scheme relate to a concern highlight through a recent school travel plan or directly from a school?
Deliverability	Known factors that may limit the potential for a scheme to be delivered (i.e. land acquisition)
	Potential for other necessary highways work to be carried out as part of the scheme
Safety	Separate scoring framework relating to network hierarchy and the number and severity of reported injury accidents in the last three years
Cost (additional score)	If external funding is available (i.e. developer contributions, CIL etc.)
	If future maintenance burden is low

4.2. A weighting factor is assigned to each of the six assessment criteria themes to allow for differentiation between those criteria that are more significant in achieving the aims of the Local Transport Plan. The following weightings are listed in priority order (highest first) and have been approved by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport:

4.3. A weighting factor is assigned to each of the six assessment criteria themes to allow for differentiation between those criteria that are more significant in achieving the aims of the Local Transport Plan. The following weightings are listed in priority order (highest first) and have been approved by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport:

- Safety
- Deliverability
- Local support
- Network management and modal shift
- Accessibility

4.4. The submission of this petition will strengthen the local support element that forms part of the prioritisation process.

5. Defining an appropriate scheme

- 5.1. In developing potential schemes, Shropshire Council traffic engineers are required to give consideration to perceived danger and agree that a perception is 'fair'. Submissions made by town and parish councils are taken as being supported by a weight of community concern.
- 5.2. The Road Safety Policy framework enables Shropshire Council traffic engineers to consider what traffic management measures will best address a defined problem taking account of road function, existing traffic and accident data and community led concerns. Further liaison is typically undertaken with key stakeholders as part of this process.
- 5.3. The Road Safety Policy is based upon a 'toolkit' of measures available for use by Shropshire Council's traffic engineers, enabling individual sites of concern to be looked at and the most appropriate traffic management intervention for that site determined. The use of speed restrictions is only one measure within the toolkit that can be used to address road safety.
- 5.4. Where a speed restriction is considered, the DfT Circular 01/2013 "Setting Local Speed Limits", is used to aid decision making. It states that speed limits should:
- be evidence-led and self-explaining;
 - seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel, and
 - encourage self-compliance.
- 5.5. Shropshire Council's approved technical guidance note on 20mph speed restrictions recommends that 20mph speed restrictions must be implemented with clear objectives and an understanding of potential future liabilities. There are a number of key considerations that need to be taken into account if such schemes are to be progressed:
- Is a 20mph speed restriction the most suitable measure to implement to address a defined problem?
 - Is it likely to have a measurable and positive speed reducing effect?
 - Is there something that would better address the community's concerns?
 - Is implementation of a 20mph speed restriction going to need additional physical measures to promote self-compliance and is this suitable in this location?
- 5.6. In addition, the guidance note states that 20mph speed restrictions will only be considered in the following locations:
- 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 / pedestrian dominated areas.

6. New Street

- 6.1. A concern about road safety and vehicle speeds on New Street is not a new issue. This concern is compounded by existing highway geometry in this location and narrow footway provision.
- 6.2. New Street is categorised as an urban main distributor road. Therefore, it is considered to be a strategic road for traffic within Shropshire's highway network.
- 6.3. In March 2009 Shropshire County Council implemented an experimental traffic order to reduce the entry speed into New Street from Frankwell roundabout by closing the slip road. This restriction became permanent in October 2010.
- 6.4. In addition, improved traffic signing was provided to promote alternative routes into and out of the town centre and reduce traffic volumes on New Street. A traffic survey carried out in November 2009 indicated a 2.5mph reduction in the mean speed of traffic and around a 33% reduction in volume of outbound traffic on the road over previous counts in the area.
- 6.5. For the period 2009 to 2013 the recorded speeds in the vicinity of the junction with Water Lane remained consistent with mean speeds of 27-28mph and 85% of traffic travelling at speeds of 31-32 mph or less.
- 6.6. The petition instigator approached Shropshire Council and their Local Member with a request for a 20mph speed limit on New Street in July 2014. The individual was advised to raise the issue as a site of community concern with Shrewsbury Town Council under the provisions contained in Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy. Shrewsbury Town Council submitted the concern as part of the 2014 and 2015 submissions.
- 6.7. In summary, the findings of the 2014 review by the local traffic engineer are as follows:
 - The prevailing travelled speeds were considered to be acceptable for a 30mph speed limit, and additional engineering measures were not considered necessary to further improve compliance.
 - Based on current recorded vehicle speeds additional physical traffic calming measures would be required to obtain self-compliance for a lower speed limit.
 - The street function category of a main distributor route and an assessment of the likely number of pedestrian and cycle movements suggested that the location would not be suitable for the introduction of a 20mph speed restriction in line with the approved approach for considering such speed limits in Shropshire.

- The decision was taken not to put this concern forward for further prioritisation in 2014.

6.8. The assessment of the 2015 submission has not yet been carried out. However a review of recorded personal injury collisions has been carried out for the three year period to August 2015. Four accidents have been recorded on New Street between its junction with Copthorne Road and the Boat House public house and are summarised as follows. Vehicle speed is not considered to be a contributory factor in relation to these accidents.

Table 2: Recorded accident history

Date	Severity	Location	Details
02/05/13	Slight	Boat House public house car park	Cyclist hits parked vehicle whilst negotiating a path between stationary and parked vehicle
19/06/14	Slight	Vicinity of No 35 to 40	Cyclist rides into rear of stationary car that is awaiting oncoming traffic to pass
19/11/14	Slight	Vicinity of No 35 to 40	Pedestrian struck by wing mirror of passing vehicle
23/04/15	Slight	Vicinity of No 35 to 40	Driver about to enter their vehicle is clipped by passing vehicle

7. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

7.1. Risks

- The petition could be seen as a challenge to the procedures contained within the Road Safety Policy and the agreed prioritisation process which could undermine how similar requests are dealt with by Shropshire Council in the future.
- Lack of a transparent process and inconsistencies across the county could pose a risk to the reputation of the authority.
- Pursuit of less appropriate highway measures could raise expectations at other locations. Shropshire has a diverse highway network and schemes need to be appropriate to highway function and user needs.

Opportunities

- The Road Safety Policy and associated prioritisation process supports the appropriate allocation of capital funds and the delivery of the right outcomes:
- The prioritisation process gives Community Led Concerns and officer led proposals a ranked position allowing funds to be targeted to the highest scoring schemes first.
- The ethos of Policy is to use the expertise that Shropshire Council has access to designing the most appropriate intervention for a given concern; on this

basis overall scheme cost is not taken into account until after preliminary design work has taken place.

7.2. Consultation

- Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy that was approved by Shropshire Council's Cabinet on 20th February 2013, following consultation with all Shropshire Council Members and town and parish councils. Community led concerns are submitted by town and parish Councils in line with this policy.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. This report refers to a potential scheme funded through the Integrated Transport Block element of the Department for Transport's annual grant settlement. In particular, the prioritisation approach is to inform a programme of design work that will be commissioned to Mouchel under the Term Engineering Contract. Once initial design and investigation work has taken place, a further decision will be taken on what schemes are to be taken forward to construction and form the next year's work programme for Shropshire Council's term contractor, Ringway.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. Shropshire Council has set a robust framework in place to handle and consider road safety concerns from its residents. This framework is based upon demonstrable local support for the concern and the development of appropriate levels and type of intervention, where possible. Additionally, it has an established position on where 20mph speeds limits could be considered.
- 9.2. Speed reduction may not be the appropriate solution to address the core safety concern, and consequently within the Road Safety Policy Shropshire Council encourages parish and town councils to identify what the concern is rather than promoting a solution.
- 9.3. A petition for a 20mph speed limit does indicate the level of wider community support for an issue. However, it should be treated as a community led concern in accordance with Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy.

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

- Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy. Access via: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/highways-and-traffic/road-safety-in-shropshire/shropshire-council-road-safety-policy/>
- Decision Making Session by Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport Friday, 20th December, 2013: Proposed Approach for the 20mph speed restrictions to be incorporated into Shropshire Councils Road Safety Policy. Accessed via: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee->

<services/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeeld=292&MeetingId=2608&DF=20%2f12%2f2013&Ver=2>

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Simon Jones - Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport

Local Member

Anne Chebsey

Appendices