

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS POLICY

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Summary

Speeding is a major concern for residents in Shropshire. This report proposes a Vehicle Activated Sign Policy which forms part of the Council's Speed Management Strategy for Shropshire. The Policy sets out the criteria for use and funding of Vehicle Activated Signs on the highway and specifically the cost sharing arrangements with parish and town councils for particular circumstances.

Consultation on this policy and a pilot scheme was undertaken with parish and town councils. The consultation closed at the end of September 2009. Two changes to the policy are recommended following consultation, with some further points of clarification suggested and discussed below.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- A. Approve the Vehicle Activated Signs Policy as set out in Appendix 2.

REPORT

Introduction

1. Speeding was identified as a major concern by the residents of Shropshire during the consultation for the Local Transport Plan and continues to be raised on a regular basis in correspondence to officers and members.
2. Studies suggest that when drivers reduce speed, collisions are less likely and if there are collisions, at lower speeds there will be less serious injury. This is particularly true for vulnerable road users i.e. children and older people.¹
3. In August 2006 the Department for Transport published Circular 01/2006 *Setting Local Speed Limits* which has been used as the basis for reviewing the Council's position in respect to speed limit policy and strategy. In

¹ As a general rule, each 1 mph reduction in speed is expected to reduce crash frequency by 5% (Taylor et al, 2000)

September 2007 Council approved a Speed Management Strategy that covers three areas:

- Village Speed Limits
 - Rural Speed Limits
 - Urban Speed Limits
4. A key tool in delivering the Speed Management Strategy is the use of Vehicle Activated Signs. There are two types of Vehicles Activated Signs (VAS); signs which warn of a specific hazard e.g. a junction or a bend, and those which reinforce the speed limit. This policy relates to the use of speed enforcement signs only.
 5. The signs remain blank until they are activated by approaching vehicles that are travelling at or above a particular threshold.
 6. We currently have 10 Vehicle Activated (speed) Signs in Shropshire and three of these have been partially or wholly funded by the local parish council.

Consultation responses

7. The draft policy was sent to 153 town and parish councils. Comments on the policy were received from 23 councils. A summary of the comments, with Shropshire Council officer responses are attached at Appendix 1.
8. Comments range between some clarification of policy, and some requests to reconsider. The table in Appendix 1 notes whether an issue is a clarification, or whether the comment is supported or not by council officers, with further explanation.

Clarifications

9. Clarification in the policy document is proposed on the points discussed below.
 - Ownership of a sign if 100% funded by a parish would be with the parish but alternative funding arrangements are now proposed – see paragraph 18.
 - Clarification that practical constraints may restrict the siting of a VAS, for example insufficient verge space.

Recommended changes.

10. The policy will be revised to include 20mph zones as potential locations for VAS.
11. That the funding mechanism is amended as set out in paragraph 18.

Unsupported requests for change

12. Consideration of permanent locations has been requested by some councils. This is not recommended as rotation of VAS to different sites is proposed as part of the policy because they are considered to be more effective when not a constant feature, and draw more attention from drivers. Additionally, there is a desire to avoid sign proliferation which needs to balance with the effectiveness of speed reduction.
13. A number of councils have requested a review of the funding principles as they consider any parish contribution too onerous. The limitations on Shropshire Council budgets has necessitated the prioritisation of expenditure where average speeds are above the enforcement threshold and the greatest benefits are anticipated. However, the methodology does allow VAS to be introduced where average speeds are lower than enforcement levels but only if the Parish Council is prepared to contribute or fund in full. During the consultation it has been proposed and agreed that funding from Local Joint Committees would be appropriate for the portion of the funding that would not be available by Shropshire Council.
14. Some comments have been received that this policy is not cost effective and that the duty for speed enforcement is a Police responsibility. Police resources to enforce speed restrictions are limited. Therefore the VAS policy is a pragmatic approach to achieving some speed reduction supporting Police and Safer Roads Partnership enforcement activity. This policy does not remove any 'duty' on the police but is regarded as an additional tool to achieving speed reduction

Vehicle Activated Signs Policy Amendments

15. The revised policy is set out in the attached document at Appendix 2 and the clarifications and recommended changes discussed in the paragraphs above are included.

Implementation of VAS

16. 25 parishes have requested VAS. We propose to assess these sites according to the methodology set out in the policy document and finalise a list of sites ready for installation from 1st April 2010. Work on the assessments will commence immediately.
17. Parishes are able to apply to their Local Joint Committee (LJC) for the portion of the funding not met by Shropshire Council. A decision to fund would rest with the LJC and is not guaranteed as the LJC has other calls on its budget.

Funding implications

18. As requested by Parish Councils the proposed financing mechanism, where a contribution from the Parish Council is required, has been reconsidered. The financing mechanism in the draft policy presents issues of ownership, maintenance and insurance liability and potential conflicts between the Parish

Council and Shropshire Council over siting and rotation. It also places a large capital burden on the Parish Council.

- 19. It is therefore proposed to replace with an alternative financing arrangement based on a minimum one year service level agreement between a Parish Council and Shropshire Council. Under a service level agreement, Shropshire Council would provide, operate and maintain vehicle activated speed signs in the Parish in return for an annual payment based on use.
- 20. This approach overcomes issues associated with ownership and maintains maximum flexibility and use of the asset across Shropshire, whilst providing a more affordable service to Parish Councils by removing a large capital burden on them.
- 21. Based on the lifetime costs of the signs and costs associated with relocating the signs the following fees are proposed for a 100% Parish funded site from April 2010. (For a 50% funded site the costs will be halved.) All costs will be reviewed annually.

Initial Costs	£
Installation per site	500
On-going Costs	£
Cost per week of operation per site	60

- 22. A minimum single operation period of 2 weeks and maximum of 6 weeks will apply to any site. The exact programme of rotation will need to be agreed with the Parish in advance and will be dependant upon overall demand.
- 23. Any cost due to be paid by the Parish Council will be invoiced on an annual basis, within a month of the sign installation being completed.
- 24. A model service level agreement will be drawn up to cover responsibilities, funding and other practical arrangements.

Conclusions

- 25. The adoption of this policy should reduce speeds in rural communities, thereby addressing many of the concerns which are expressed by those communities to officers and members.
- 26. The policy complements other aspects of the Council's Speed Management Strategy, including the Village Speed Limit Policy and policies being developed for Urban and Rural Speed Limits.

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

Council September 2007 - Speed Management Strategy

Draft Vehicle Activated Sign Policy sent for consultation.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

Transport measures, and traffic, can have significant effects on the environment. One of the LTP2 strategic aims is to 'protect and improve the... environment and reduce the impact of traffic on local communities'. The Councils speed management strategy, including vehicle activated signs, has been developed so that the detrimental impact of speeding traffic on the environment can be dealt with through simple schemes and a minimalist approach.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk assessments will be part of the implementation process for each sign installation.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Consultation through the Local Transport Plan showed that dealing with speeding traffic was a key priority for the people of Shropshire. The Vehicle Activated Signs policy has been developed alongside other speed management policies to address these concerns and to allow local community involvement in implementation.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Martin Taylor Smith

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Consultation responses

Appendix 2 - Revised VAS Policy Document

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS POLICY
 Comments from consultation on draft policy.

APPENDIX 1

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
Eaton-under-Heywood and Hope Bowdler	Lin Halfpenny	Have requested speed control in Hope Bowdler for several years. Hope Bowdler could share with Wall-under-Heywood and Longville as on same road.	Supported	Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. It is preferable to retain a consistent approach to type of signs used and site will be assessed according to methodology.
		Small parish - could not afford to contribute to cost. Could they be means tested?	Unsupported	As above, and also the policy is designed to still meet the greatest needs in smaller parishes as those sites which meet the criteria would get 100% funding. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council as per the criteria set out in the policy.
Shrewsbury Town Council	Mike Croston	Members coming forward to next meeting with suggested locations		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.
		Committee would like an expert opinion on methodology used to determine locations & effectiveness of the signs within an urban setting.	Clarification	Evidence of effectiveness of signs in urban areas has been gathered in other towns.
		Committee has questions regarding funding - is it appropriate to ask for contributions from LJC	Supported	Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council as per the criteria set out in the policy.
Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council	Colin Case (Chairman of Ruyton XI Towns PC)	Suggested inclusion of 20mph zones as found in some parishes. Would presumably say <20mph or lower is 100% parish council, 21-23 is 50/50 and >24 100% SC. Suggests using existing data from speed surveys - historical data should not be wasted.	Supported	The policy will be revised to include 20mph zones as potential locations for VAS.
			Supported	Data from existing surveys which is still relevant will be used. Data which is more than 12 months old we be updated by new surveys.

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		<p>Suggests that the VAS itself be used to monitor speed (manufacturer states the device is set up to log date, time and speed over select periods of the day). Parish Council could arrange for installation of a VAS at various points with cost share determined by results of the speed log whilst turned off - avoiding cost of manual surveys and avoiding the time penalty incurred.</p> <p>Convinced these signs contribute to road safety, therefore reduce accidents thus any delay installing is inexcusable. With high cost of accidents there is a strong case that such signs are self funding.</p>	Unsupported	The purchase and installation costs in order to monitor speeds are prohibitive at sites which might not meet criteria for installation.
Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council	Sue Hackett	<p>Full support of 20mph zones around schools. Wording/tables should be extended to recognise use of such signs to help enforce speed constraint in a 20mph zone.</p> <p>Method of speed measurement questioned. A council officer in high visibility jacket will result in immediate application of brakes and a low false reading.</p> <p>More reliable and economical method is to use VAS itself to monitor speed with display turned off. Much less obvious than a council officer in hi-vis jacket. This method could measure speed over a longer, selectable period of time and give a baseline of effectiveness when the VAS is turned on.</p>	Supported	<p>The budget for implementation is limited to that available from Shropshire Council allocated LTP funding. It is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the proposed methodology will achieve this.</p> <p>The potential benefit in casualty savings by using these signs is recognised and is part of the justification for introducing them.</p> <p>The policy will be revised to include 20mph zones as potential locations for VAS.</p>
			Unsupported	The draft policy proposes that surveys would be conducted in unmarked vans.
			Unsupported	The purchase and installation costs in order to monitor speeds are prohibitive at sites which might not meet criteria for installation.
Kinnerley Parish Council	Kate Sanderson	<p>Kinnerley PC support initiative & would like consideration given to following sites where vehicles exceed the speed limit: Maesbrook by the Black Horse pub (currently 40mph) Kinnerley on the straight road outside Parish Hall (currently 30mph)</p>		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		Kinnerley at Edgerley end of village, before Kinnerley school (currently 30mph)		
		Would consider a joint arrangement with an adjoining parish council if above proposal is not agreeable.	Supported	Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites.
West Felton Parish Council	Chris Lovell	Shropshire Council, as highway authority, should be prepared to meet full cost of VAS at Queens Head.	Clarification	The site will be assessed by the methodology identified in the policy. As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the approach to do this.
Astley Abbots, Ditton Priors & Easthope Shipton and Stanton Long Parish Councils	Jayne Madeley	All three parish councils support policy but have reservations about financial costs on small precepts. Willing to investigate with council officers.		Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy.
Ellesmere Rural & Baschurch Parish	Anne Howls	Requested clarification on three points Do you need 3 sites within a village?	Clarification	A Parish can put forward one or more sites - they do not have to be in the same village. Ideally we are looking for 3 sites from any one Parish but we may be able to rotate a single sign between three sites in adjoining parishes with any cost sharing met by all the Parishes involved.
		Do all the sites have to be same speed limit?	Clarification	The signs are adjustable so that they can be used in location with different speed limits.
		Will monitoring take place to establish percentage cost?	Clarification	A Parish will not have to commit until after the monitoring has been undertaken and the cost implications to the Parish are known.
Ellesmere Town Council	Barbara Harrington	Two locations put forward for a VAS. Oswestry Road from the Business Park to Lakeland School Tunnel Bank - approaching Ellesmere alongside the Convent area		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.
Llanyblodwel Parish Council	Amy Gregory	Bryn, Melyn and Dolgoch request to be considered for VAS.		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
Alberbury with Cardeston Parish Council	R L Groome	Would like to be put forward for VAS.		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.
Ford Council	Eric T Jones	Most concern about speed of vehicles on A458 trunk road.		VAS policy does not apply to trunk roads.
Ludlow Council	Gina Wilding	Councillors were in agreement with the draft policy.		
Loppington Parish Council	David Edge	Loppington Parish Council considers that the proposals are cost prohibitive to smaller councils and that the funding principles should be reconsidered	Unsupported	As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology proposed is the approach to achieve this. Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy.
Berrington Council	Fiona Hibberd	Requesting VAS positioned on entering Cross Houses from Shrewsbury		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.
Cockshutt cum Petton Council	Carole Warner	Requested VAS on A528 Southern side of Cockshutt		Sites to be assessed according to methodology.
		Cost implication to parish councils with small annual budget is significant. PC could not afford without increase in precept - not acceptable. Funding should be county responsibility	Unsupported	As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the best approach to achieve this. Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy.
		Only states installation would be on rotation basis, appears to be no option for permanent sign even if parish council is partly funding. There are currently signs sited permanently, are these to be changed to rotation?	Clarification	A number of signs have been implemented already, on a scheme by scheme basis. Rotation of these may be considered in the future. Rotation of VAS to different sites is proposed as part of the policy as they are considered to be more effective when not a

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				constant feature, and draw more attention from drivers. Additionally there is a desire to avoid proliferation of signs which is to be balanced with the effectiveness of speed reduction.
		Another concern is that once a location has been identified there will be no further consultation with PCs regarding the initial monitoring (appendix A). Local knowledge of the best sites should be sought and considered by officers.	Supported	Dialogue with parish councils will continue if a request for a site has been considered.
		Days of week and time of monitoring is not mentioned. It is essential it is carried out at peak times 8:00am - 9:00am and 5:00pm - 6:00pm.	Supported	Monitoring should be carried out at appropriate times for the location. In some locations this may be outside the traditional peak periods.
		Welcomes all initiatives associated with speed limit enforcement and hopes SC will consider above points when proceeding with strategy.		
Nash Council	Cllr J G Boak	1) PC funding - Expensive sign uneconomic in reducing the speed of the occasional offending vehicle if mean speed is restricted limit or lower 2) Joint funding - with the mean below 13% unlikely that mean speed will be significantly cut by VAS apart from in area in close proximity of VAS. What is needed is speed regulation throughout the length of restriction. 3) SC 100% funding at mean speeds in excess of 15% over limit. This often occurs after first sign has been passed. A VAS immediately draws attention to limit and normally decelerates vehicle for period between the VAS and the next fixed repeater sign(s). No evidence offered to say what effect it has throughout the length of restricted section of road i.e. after 100 yards has mean speed increased and by how much? Very little will prevent the determined fast driver apart from police enforcement.	Unsupported	Evidence from elsewhere in the country is that VAS have been effective in reducing speeds. See above. Also bear in mind that VAS is not the only tool available and enforcement by Safer Roads Partnership and the Police may be appropriate in some location. Points raised are valid, but extent to which speeds increase again after passing a VAS are likely to depend on the specific road conditions. Overall evidence does indicate that mean speeds are reduced.
			Clarification	Acknowledged that 'determined' speeders still exist, but signs have been shown to be effective on average speed reduction.

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		4) Initial costs - how is purchase set at £2500 - the more the council buy the more discount they receive? operating costs - are totals given total or weekly? Unclear why 6 wk rotation £900 4 wk £1300 and 2 wk £2600.	Clarification	This cost already anticipates multiple order costs.
		Photos show VAS is solar powered - so apart from possible yearly maintenance the costs indicated are possibly the charges involved in moving equipment. Why should it cost any more to move them after 2wks or 4 wks than it does after 6 wks?	Clarification	An annual cost is given for operating sites. A shorter rotation of signs will involve more staff time moving the signs per annum. The charging mechanism has been revised in the final document to give a cost per site per week, rather than a cost per sign, which should make management and agreement with parishes more straightforward. Comment as above.
		5) If PC wants to purchase a VAS for own use should have right to purchase it even though may only have a single location where they wish to install.	Clarification	Rotation of VAS to different sites is proposed as part of the policy as they are considered to be more effective when not a constant feature, and draw more attention from drivers. Additionally there is a desire to avoid proliferation of signs which is to be balanced with the effectiveness of speed reduction.
		6) Unclear how this policy matches with signs already installed in Shropshire. E.g. A4117 between Clee Hill & Ludlow has 2 such signs in 50mph 60mph area - have been there for many months. Respondent noted that signs appear to be effective, and therefore not advocating moving.		A number of signs have been implemented already, on a scheme by scheme basis. As they have on the whole been successful, and due to the need to manage the number of requests and budget available, this policy has been drafted.
		7) Policy states that on 50:50 funded sign, ownership remains with SC throughout effective life. Previous comments talk about 12 month agreement for all signs - looks like parish will not own purchased sign. 12 months needs deleting in case of Parish owned sign as PC must have right to decide how many locations and for how long, otherwise SC should own all signs and use a weekly/monthly hire out charge system.	Clarification	Even if a sign is 100% funded by a parish, annual operating costs will be incurred. Work on the highway and signs will need to be undertaken by SC. However ownership of a sign if 100% funded by a parish would be with the parish.

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		8) Questions regarding validity of the speed monitoring methodology: On quieter routes fails to say when and on what basis time chosen.	Clarification	Monitoring should be carried out at appropriate times for the location. In some locations this may be outside the traditional peak periods.
		Time chosen should be selected by use of ATCs that have been in place for a no. of weeks to record most likely period of speeding. Many rural roads speeding happens outside normal working hours so reading taken between 8:00 and 18:00hrs would not necessarily give true mean speed.	Unsupported	The method for speed monitoring for site assessment has been selected as cost effective and are still sufficiently robust. ATC speed counts are more expensive (£300 per site minimum). Monitoring should be carried out at appropriate times for the location. In some locations this may be outside the traditional peak periods.
		On primary/busy routes "100 free flowing vehicles" monitored also subject to similar inaccuracy. Should the measure not be standardised using ATC? These produce more reliable measure over longer period and do not have same instantaneous reduction in speed as the site of a vehicle mounted or hand held laser gun in the distance.	Unsupported	The method for speed monitoring for site assessment has been selected as cost effective and are still sufficiently robust. ATC speed counts are more expensive (£300 per site minimum). Surveys would be undertaken covertly in an unmarked vehicle.
		9) Priority traffic flow systems, used by other local Highway departments in other counties, appear to have longer term and significant action for speeding traffic. Would it be worth evaluating against the cost of a VAS which are only a temporary measure in one location?		SC has implemented such 'priority flow' measures in some locations. These would be considered relevant for some sites, which could potentially come forward under other funding streams if problems need treatment. As all SC transport programme budgets are limited schemes are still prioritised on a 'maximum benefit' principle as far as possible. The VAS policy is a relatively lost cost option to assist in speed reduction in key locations, which might not be deemed high enough priority for other treatment.
Condover Parish Council		The PC appreciate and support that speeding is a major concern of communities in rural settlements, narrow lanes not good for pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders/vehicles/heavy goods/farm vehicles. Parish		

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		<p>plan also supports this statement.</p>		
		<p>VAS already installed in Condover has resulted in a marked reduction in speeding vehicles. Community happy, no enforcement necessary. Both councils are seen to be doing something about speeding.</p>		
		<p>PC supports the introduction of VAS in rural communities where a need has been identified. (Condover VAS has been financed through an S106 and not impacted on precept.) PC has concerns that where a PC is expected to fund as per principles set out in table, will not always be possible as rural PC precepts are small.</p>	<p>Unsupported</p>	<p>As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the best approach to achieve this. Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy. S106 funding is only a possibility if linked to a new development.</p>
		<p>Traffic management is a principal authority's responsibility and should be funded by them. Local parish input is useful but technical input and expertise lies largely with principal authority.</p>	<p>Unsupported</p>	<p>Comment on budget limitations as above.</p>
		<p>Supportive of 20mph limit being mandatory in the vicinity of schools</p>		<p>Draft policy on Urban/Rural Speed Limits is out to consultation in Nov / Dec 2009 and this covers 20 mph zones.</p>
<p>Welshampton and Lyneal Parish Council</p>	<p>Carole Warner - clerk</p>	<p>PC agrees with background to proposal and recognises the use of VAS is one key tool in the prevention of speeding. Already benefits from intermittent installation of sign on A495 on approach into the village from Whitchurch direction. Already identified need for sign on A495 on approach from Ellesmere. Concern for many years. Previous incidents (including 22/08/09 machinery fell from vehicle partly demolishing house) demonstrates urgency. Village school only a few yards away.</p>		<p>Sites to be assessed according to methodology.</p>

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		<p>Awaiting extension of 30mph limit along B5063 and possible 40mph buffer zone. A VAS on this road would help enforce new restrictions.</p> <p>On basis of each sign being rotated across min. 3 sites one should be allocated to Welshampton and randomly located at these sites (namely A495W, A495E & B5063)</p> <p>Do not agree with funding principals, no logic in splitting cost. A small PC could not afford with massive increase in precepts, not acceptable. Road safety is a county responsibility which SC obviously recognises as Shropshire will pay all costs where speeds are exceeded by >10%</p>		<p>Draft policy on Urban/Rural Speed Limits is out to consultation in Nov / Dec 2009 and this covers 20 mph zones.</p> <p>Sites to be assessed according to methodology.</p>
		<p>Concerned that funds will be distributed first come first served. This should be on a needs basis, ranked after speed surveys.</p> <p>PC welcomes all initiatives associated with speed limit enforcement, and hopes the SC considers the above points when proceeding with Speed Management Strategy.</p>	Unsupported	<p>As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the approach to do this.</p> <p>Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy.</p> <p>The pilot approach of first come first served has been put forward as a pragmatic approach to implementation.</p>
Hadnall Council	Peter Clarke	<p>1) PC does not agree that "the key tool in delivering a speed management strategy" is VAS</p> <p>2) The issue of speeding in a restricted area is a policing issue. It is entirely the responsibility of police to monitor vehicle speeds in restricted areas and bring prosecutions where appropriate.</p> <p>3) The deterrent involved in bringing prosecutions to bear on speeding motorists is more effective. PC considers that no amount of illuminated signs will have same effect</p> <p>4) SC should be pursuing the regularity of police speed camera checks and not this VAS policy. There</p>	Unsupported	<p>Policy statement is a key tool.</p> <p>Police resources to enforce speed restrictions are limited. Therefore the VAS policy is a pragmatic approach to achieving some speed reduction. This policy does not remove any 'duty' on the police but is regarded as an additional tool to achieve speed reduction</p>

Parish name	Main contact	Summary of comments from Parish/Town Council	Comment supported / unsupported	Shropshire Council officer response.
		<p>is an issue of speeding along our village's section of A49.</p> <p>5) It is accepted that SC have the powers to install VAS they do not have a mandate to take on tasks which should be budgeted by and carried out by the West Mercia Police Authority as part of their regular law enforcement activities.</p> <p>6) Regardless of who funds the proposal members consider it a serious misuse of council tax revenue. It would appear that apart from the installation cost added to the SC portion of the council tax, the PC may be asked to contribute up to £2,600 per annum in perpetuity.</p>	Clarification	Costs as set out in the draft policy document are based on anticipated operational costs. Whilst a parish/town remained in the scheme with a VAS these costs would be incurred. Both parish and SC may wish to review position in future years.
Chelmarsh Parish Council	Mrs REJ Yeomans	<p>Strongly support the provision of VAS - would like one installed along B4555 40mph zone opposite the Bull's Head Inn.</p> <p>Such measures are to improve highway safety and should be responsibility of the Highway authority, SC, preferably with support of police. Expecting parish councils to pay for such equipment is felt to be wrong and an unacceptable burden.</p>	Unsupported	<p>Site to be assessed according to methodology.</p> <p>As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the approach to do this. Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy.</p>
Quatt Parish Council	Michael Massey	Seeking VAS on A442 at start of 40mph speed limit which was implementation on 02/07		Site to be assessed according to methodology.
Shawbury Parish Council	Jack Wilson	<p>Object to the concept which puts the onus of payments onto PCs for many of proposed signs.</p> <p>It is SCs responsibility and duty to undertake accident surveys and carry out measures to target casualty reduction. The responsibility for curbing speed remains with SC thus payment for placement and maintenance of any measure must rest with that council, not the parish.</p>	Unsupported	As the budget is limited it is necessary to prioritise spending where greatest benefit is anticipated, the methodology is the approach to do this. Matching up parishes to share signs/costs is recommended for VAS sites. Funding from LJC may be available for the portion of the funding not made available by Shropshire Council, which would be dependent on sites meeting criteria set out in policy. Where sites have accident problems they may be dealt with

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Albrighton Parish Council	Michael Ward	<p>Members have asked that consideration be given to the use of VAS at Newport Road entrance to village from Wylval nursery on A41.</p> <p>Cross Road where SC is already funding some road improvements to counter speeding and which contains the exit from Newhouse Lane Primary school Station Road where signs have been used in the past to counter speeding.</p> <p>Two key priorities are Cross Road and Newport Road due to flood alleviation works nearing completion.</p> <p>Any assistance given to reducing speed on these roads the Council would be grateful</p>		<p>separately under other transport capital budgets for accident remedial treatment.</p> <p>Sites to be assessed according to methodology.</p>

Vehicle Activated Signs Policy



Speeding is a major concern for residents in Shropshire. This document sets out the criteria for use and funding of vehicle activated signs on the highway and specifically the cost sharing arrangements with parish and town councils for particular circumstances. This document forms the second in a series of the Council's Speed Management Strategy for Shropshire following the publication of the Village Speed Limits Policy in October 2007.

Background

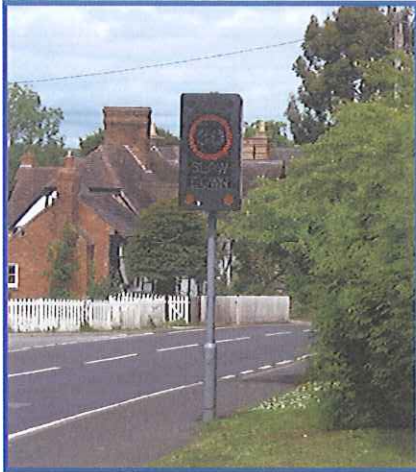
Speeding was identified as a major concern by the residents of Shropshire during the consultation for the Local Transport Plan and continues to be raised on regular basis in correspondence to officers and members.

Studies show that when drivers reduce speed, collisions are less likely and if there are collisions, at lower speeds there will be less serious injury. This is particularly true for vulnerable road users i.e. children and older people.



In August 2006 the Department for Transport published Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits which has been used as the basis for reviewing the Council's position in respect to speed limit policy and strategy. In September 2007 Council approved a Speed Management Strategy that covers three areas:

- Village speed limits
- Rural speed limits
- Urban speed limits



A key tool in delivering the Speed Management Strategy is the use of **vehicle activated signs**. There are two types of vehicles activated signs; signs which warn of a specific hazard e.g. a junction or a bend, and those which reinforce the speed limit. This policy relates to the use of **speed enforcement signs only**.

The signs remain blank until they are activated by approaching vehicles that are travelling at or above a particular threshold.

We currently have 10 vehicle activated (speed) signs in Shropshire and three of these have been partially or wholly funded by the local parish council.

Policy approach

Locations where speeding concerns have been identified by parish councils and others will be assessed and vehicle speeds will be covertly monitored by officers using handheld laser devices. (See Appendix A).

Funding principles:

The following table sets out how the funding criteria for sites will work:

Mean speed in 20 mph zone	Mean speed in 30 mph zone	Mean speed in 40 mph zone	Funding arrangements
20 mph or lower	30 mph or lower	40 mph or lower	Parish Council 100%
21 to 23 mph	31 to 34 mph	41 to 45 mph	Shropshire Council 50% Parish Council 50%
24 mph or higher	35 mph or higher	46 mph or higher	Shropshire Council 100%

Subject to funding being available vehicle activated signs will be installed in line with the following criteria:

The vehicle activated signs will be rotated on the following basis:

- Maximum time at any one site 6 weeks
- Minimum time at any one site 2 weeks
- Minimum of 2 weeks between rotations

During the rotation of vehicle activated signs they will be replaced by fixed signs which indicate that speeds are monitored in the area.



The current costs of providing a vehicle activated sign are as follows:

- Initial cost - £500 (one off payment)
- Operating costs - £60 per site, per week

Any cost due to be paid by the Parish Council will be invoiced annually. The cost per annum will vary depending on the rotation with other sites either within the same parish or another.¹

Other considerations

Each sign will be rotated across a minimum of 2 sites. The area across which signs will be rotated will be restricted in order to ensure that use of the sign is practical and cost-effective. It will therefore be necessary to identify 2 or more sites within a parish or neighbouring parishes before an agreement can be put into place. The agreement will be for a minimum of 12 months.

Vehicle activated signs will only be used in main speed limits and will not be used in buffer zones unless there is no appropriate site within the main speed limit. The signs will be procured and installed by Shropshire Council and will conform to a standard specification.

The cost of sign repairs and maintenance are included in the operating costs which will be reviewed annually in March for the subsequent year.



Practical constraints may restrict the siting of a VAS if insufficient verge space.

Signs will remain in the ownership of Shropshire Council throughout their effective life.

Conclusions

The adoption of this policy should reduce speeds and casualties in rural communities, thereby addressing many of the concerns which are expressed by those communities to officers and members.

The policy complements other aspects of the Council's Speed Management Strategy, including the Village Speed Limit Policy and policies being developed for urban and rural areas.



¹Costs will be reviewed annually and adjusted if necessary based on supplies & labour costs.

Vehicle Activated Signs Policy

Appendix A – Vehicle Speed Monitoring

Locations where speeding concerns have been identified by parish councils and others will be assessed and vehicle speeds will be covertly monitored by officers using handheld laser devices.

Once a Parish Council has identified a location(s) for consideration of a Vehicle Activate Sign (VAS), a site visit will be carried out to determine a suitable location to record vehicle speeds.

Ideally this will be carried out from within a vehicle, parked off the live carriageway, and will involve pointing a hand held laser gun at a vehicle to obtain the speed it is currently travelling at. On busy routes 100 free flowing vehicles will be recorded in each direction and the average speed will be calculated for each direction. On quieter routes a minimum of 1 hour will be spent recording vehicles in each direction to calculate the average speeds.

In locations where it would be unsafe to park a vehicle to obtain this data, an Automatic Traffic Counter will be laid for a 1 week period to gather vehicle speed data.