

Meeting date: 20 January 2021
Report to: Stronger Communities & Neighbourhood
Services Scrutiny Board



Subject/report title: Speed Enforcement in Solihull – A New Approach
Report from: Head of Highway Management / West Midlands Police Partnerships
Inspector
Report author/lead contact officer: Paul Tovey / Insp. Sharon Jones

Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide an overview of current practice and discuss moving towards a new partnership led approach to speed and traffic enforcement in Solihull.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 The views of Scrutiny Board are requested in respect of the specific questions detailed in the report.

3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 A large number of concerns are raised by our local communities to both the Council and the Police concerning vehicles travelling at inconsiderate speeds or exceeding the sign posted speed limit. This report will facilitate a discussion regarding the setting of speed limits on the local road network in Solihull and future policy. This will then lead to an information sharing session on behalf of the Police and the Highway Management Team in respect of current priorities and levels of service.

3.2 There will then be an opportunity to discuss whether any changes are required to the current levels of service, including details of an alternative partnership based approach to tackling some of these problems.

- 3.3 In addition to speeding offences, there will also be an update on the enforcement of moving traffic offences that occur on the public highway.
- 3.4 Any recommendations resulting from these discussions will then be fed into the Environment and Highways Cabinet decision-making process later in the year.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

Speed Limits – The current position

- 4.1 Highways England is responsible for determining speed limits on the Strategic Road Network and therefore do not form part of this discussion.
- 4.2 However, Solihull Council, as the local traffic authority, is responsible for determining speed limits on the local road network. As part of this process, the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police for Solihull has to be consulted where any changes are proposed to the legal Traffic Regulation Order that support the individual speed limits, except where the national speed limit applies in the situations below:
- 30 mph in street light residential areas subject to a system of street lighting
 - 70mph on dual-carriageways; or
 - 60 mph on single carriageways where no specific order has been introduced.
- 4.3 The plan in Appendix A shows the maximum speed limits that currently apply in Solihull. In recent years, several types of 20 mph speed limit have been used including advisory and part-time, but for these purposes the appropriate permanent speed limit is shown in these areas, which is usually 30 mph.
- 4.4 The Department for Transport in the Local Transport Circular 1/2013 “Setting Local Speed Limits” sets out that the underlying aim should be to achieve a ‘safe’ distribution of speeds. The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:
- road traffic collision records (where available);
 - road geometry and engineering design standards;
 - road function;
 - composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users);
 - existing traffic speeds; and
 - the local environment type e.g. rural or urban.
- 4.5 While these factors need to be considered for all road types, they may be weighted differently in urban or rural areas. The impact on community and environmental outcomes should also be considered.
- 4.6 The minimum length of a speed limit should generally be not less than 600 metres to avoid too many changes of speed limit along a particular route, which could have safety implications. Speed limits should, therefore, not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, such as a single road junction or reduced forward visibility, for example, at a bend.

- 4.7 As required in the guidance, speed limits should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and the next review is due to take place later this year. There have already been several proposed lower speed limits as part of the new road layout around the site of the new HS2 railway station and others will no doubt come forward as part of the Local Plan Review process as the urban area changes.
- 4.8 The other main policy change introduced in the latest guidance is the general use of 20 mph speed limits. The feedback from those introduced so far has been very mixed with no clear road safety benefit, or significant reduction in actual traffic speeds, unless they are supported by some form of physical traffic calming measures, which in themselves can be unpopular.

5. Scrutiny Board Views

- 5.1 With regard to the use of 20 mph speed limits, where should the Council's priorities be based in future e.g. outside Schools, residential areas, local village centres or other?
- 5.2 In the knowledge of the pending review of speed limits pertaining to the local road network in Solihull, are there any other issues that members would like taken into consideration by the Environment and Highways Cabinet, when it considers this matter later this year?

6. Speed Enforcement and new ways of working - what options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 6.1 There is anecdotal evidence, from the number of public complaints received, that speeding problems may have increased during the recent COVID situation. This has yet to materialise in respect of the number of road traffic collisions.
- 6.2 Whilst enforcement of speed limits is a statutory duty carried out by the Police, the overall response to managing road safety in the Borough is overseen by the Safer Solihull Partnership. One of its sub-groups, the Road Safety Partnership in Solihull, which is led by WM Fire Service leads on this subject and reports to both the local Safer Solihull Partnership and the West Midlands Regional Road Safety partnership which is led by Transport for West Midlands.
- 6.3 West Midlands Police provide the lead on speed enforcement which is currently being delivered in the borough on three different levels:
- **Average Speed Camera Enforcement** – In partnership with WM Police and Birmingham City Council, a 5-year pilot scheme began in 2016 at 11 sites (3 in Solihull) to evaluate this relatively new type of system and business case. Recently, Coventry and the four Black Country authorities, are also moving forward with this type of system, which may lead to a more regional based solution in the future.
 - **Mobile Speed Camera Enforcement** – WM Police operate up to 4 vehicles around the West Midlands region at over 150 community concern sites, 18 of which operate in Solihull. Frequency of deployment will vary depending on resources and priorities but typically each site will be enforced 3 to 4 times per year.
 - **GATSO speed enforcement sites** – There are 26 Gatso camera housings located

around the Borough, that are the Council's asset as indicated on the plan in Appendix B. These sites, although no longer operational, the housing and associated signage serve as a reminder to motorists, many of whom can be seen reducing speeds when passing this street furniture.

- **Prolaser Speed Enforcement** – This involves local policing teams using hand held speed measuring equipment (Prolaser) in response to local complaints. All police neighbourhood teams have access to handheld speed Prolaser devices and undertake speed enforcement operations on a regular basis. The time and location of these checks is led by both complaints from the public and casualty data.

6.4 In addition to the enforcement operations, there is also a range of educational activity being carried out by the partners in the local communities to help raise awareness of road safety issues caused by speeding motorists.

- **Community Speed Watch** - The borough has a number of active community speed watch groups. Here, volunteer led groups measure the speed of vehicles and advisory letters are issued to motorists recorded as speeding. For example, the St. Alphege ward area has three active groups who undertake two speed watch sessions each a month (the maximum allowed under WMP policy).

Typically, up to five local residents, measure and record the speed of motor vehicles and the percentage over the speed limit. As an example, the Dorchester Road group recently measured the speed of over 600 vehicles in one session. Offending motorists were sent warning letters and the data shared with the Neighbourhood Policing team to help inform future enforcement activity.

- **Speed Aware programme** – The Council's Highway Management team deliver a programme of Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) signs and "Speed Kills" posters in response to concerns raised by residents and ward members. With four active VAS signs, the programme can deliver up to 48 campaigns per year around the borough.
- **MAVE's** (Multi-Agency Vehicle Examinations) are a road side check site where a number of different agencies carry out a series of checks on motor vehicles and their occupants to reduce road traffic offences, reduce crime, promote road safety, educate motorists and enforce any road traffic offences including speeding as required. Co-ordinated by the Police partnerships team they provide a helpful tool to both enforce and educate on traffic law, including speeding.

6.5 It is estimated that over 15,000 speeding fines were issued in 2020 to road users in Solihull, but this doesn't appear to be making a difference to the number of complaints being received.

6.6 With over 1,000 streets on the local road network, the available resources will only be deployed in a small proportion of concern sites each year. The challenge being, how to move from being a reactive service to one that is more proactive and effective at changing driver behaviours and helping to meet the Council's casualty reduction target.

7. Scrutiny Board Views

7.1 To help move the Speed education and enforcement services forward the following service improvements have been identified and the views of Scrutiny Board are requested in respect of:

- **Average Speed Camera sites** – discussions continue in respect to developing a regional approach to the use of this type of equipment and a further report will be considered by Environment and Highways Cabinet later this year. **The option the Council has to consider is whether to keep the 3 sites where they are currently located (see Appendix B) or whether to move these to new locations that have similar road safety concerns?**
- **Mobile Enforcement sites** – were first introduced over 10 years ago where there had previously been low numbers of potential speed related road traffic collisions. It is suggested that in consultation with West Midlands Police that a full review should be carried out to understand the level of enforcement resources available for use in Solihull and where best, given today's Road Safety and Transport priorities. The implications being that some roads could see the current enforcement being moved to new locations. **Are Scrutiny Board supportive of the review and are there any matters of policy they would like considered?**
- **GATSO camera housing and associated signage** – Since 2016, this equipment has been obsolete and is no longer operational. A decision was taken regionally to retain the housings as they still offered a positive contribution. Over time, the condition of some of the equipment has deteriorated and they are in need of some maintenance works or removal.
 - **There are 3 options under consideration:**
 1. **Removal of all housings and signage at an estimated cost of £80,000;**
 2. **Phased removal (12 sites per year) over the next 3 years based on condition and road safety benefit at a cost of approximately £30,000 per year;**
 3. **Retain those housings that remain in a safe condition. Carry out general maintenance, i.e. cleaning, alignment and electrical testing. Estimated cost at £20,000 per annum for the next 5 years;**
- **Prolaser Enforcement** – a police led initiative which enables enforcement to be responsive to emerging concerns. No changes are planned except for the need to share results and improve record keeping which the Highway Management team will lead on with colleagues at Transport for West Midlands who manage the West Midlands Traffic and Collision data base (Data Insight)
- **Speed Aware Programme** – The current programme, which includes the use of “Speed Kills” posters (see Appendix C), has also been operating in Solihull for over 10 years and has helped raise awareness of speeding concerns at approximately 300 sites in the borough. Whilst the speed signs are relatively new and performing well, the posters used in conjunction are feeling tired and the message is becoming

dated. It is suggested that now would be an appropriate time to review and perhaps change to a different and potentially more relevant safety message. **Appendix C also includes some potential alternative poster designs and Scrutiny Board are asked to comment on their preference or perhaps they would support all being used in the future?**

8. Reasons for recommending preferred option

8.1 In summary, there is a lot of work being delivered and undertaken through the Solihull Road Safety partnership aimed at meeting the Council’s ambitious casualty reduction target. Speeding and how this is managed in the future will be a key part in achieving this and saving people’s lives.

8.2 This discussion paper provides an opportunity for Scrutiny Board to feed into the review process at an early stage in order to help achieve the overarching road traffic casualty reduction targets set out in the Council’s Road Safety Strategy 2017 to 2030.

8.3 Are there any other matters relating to the Speed Enforcement or Educational projects that Scrutiny Board would like to be evaluated and explored further?

9. Implications and Considerations

9.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>There are strong links to the local economy and the impact road traffic collisions can have on its performance. Serious and Fatal road traffic collisions can cause the local road network to be closed for long periods of time restricting access to retail centres and transport corridors. Reducing the frequency of such incidents is therefore important.</p> <p>Equally, reducing road safety risk through good street and public realm design is essential and can help create safe places in which people can live, work and enjoy their leisure time.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull’s natural environment. 5. Improve Solihull’s air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull’s net carbon emissions. 	<p>The types of environment can play a huge part in helping to reduce the number of casualties occurring in the borough. Through fewer road traffic collision there will be less congestion leading to better air quality and pollution levels.</p> <p>Through technology the introduction of e-powered vehicles has the ability to bring with them safer systems of moving people which</p>

	over time again can have a positive contribution.
<p>People and Communities:</p> <p>7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>8. Enable communities to thrive.</p> <p>9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs.</p>	<p>People and our local communities are at the centre of our speed management priorities. Solihull has one of the safest local road networks in the country and this means that people have a greater chance to take the opportunities that are available to them in a safe and sustainable way.</p>

9.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

9.2.1 None prior to this Scrutiny Board meeting which is being held at the start of this process.

9.3 Financial implications:

9.3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the topics of discussion in this paper at this stage. Any proposed changes from potential options that will in future result in additional costs will be subject to further consideration and approval by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

9.3.2 It is worth noting that the Council is no longer allocated specific revenue funding for Road Safety initiatives. From time to time, there are grant funding opportunities aimed at specific issues such as the current HS2 Road Safety Fund where the council received £2.435m to deliver improvement along the route of the project. This project is subject to ongoing monitoring through the Cabinet process.

9.3.3 There are also discussions ongoing at both a regional and government level in respect of how income generated from traffic offences, such as speeding, should be used in future. Whilst income generated from anyone sent on a Driver Speed Awareness Course is managed by the Police; those speeding contraventions over a certain threshold are referred to the courts with any subsequent income from the associated fine going to the Treasury. These discussions are ongoing and are also included in the decriminalisation of certain moving traffic offences.

9.4 Legal implications:

9.4.1 None as a result of this discussion paper.

9.4.2 The setting of local speed limits has to follow a defined legal process to ensure successful prosecution in the event anyone is caught exceeding the maximum speed limit Orders.

9.5 Risk implications:

9.5.1 None as a result of this discussion paper.

9.6 Equality implications:

None at this stage in the process and generally in terms of speed limits and enforcement then these apply equally to every motorist.

10. List of appendices referred to

10.1 Appendix A – Speed Limit plan of the Borough.

10.2 Appendix B – Speed Camera Locations

10.3 Appendix C – Speed Aware Poster designs

11. Background papers used to compile this report

11.1 The Department for Transport in the Local Transport Circular 1/2013 “Setting Local Speed Limits”

11.2 A Road Safety Strategy for Solihull 2017 -2030

12. List of other relevant documents

12.1 None.