

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture)

Date: 18th November 2014

Subject: THE PROVISION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN LEEDS

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Best City ambition is to improve life for the people of Leeds and make our city a better place. The provision of twenty miles-per-hour (20pmh) speed limits contribute to this ambition by improving the safety and quality of life of Leeds residents by enabling safe pedestrian and cycling journeys in local communities and reducing traffic collisions to make a specific contribution to the Best City for Communities and Child Friendly City ambitions. This report presents the current approach to the provision of 20 mph schemes in residential areas as followed by the Council.
2. The Council is working towards an ultimate aim that the majority of residential streets will have the amenity of a 20 mph speed limits. The current approach is to secure best use of resources by concentrating on areas around schools, prioritising areas with higher road injury rates, where the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit is most likely to bring benefits in the form of a reduction in speed-related collision and, at the same time, mitigate the effects of busy and fast flowing traffic has on pedestrians and cyclists, with an emphasis on the journey to school. This approach uses traffic calming only where traffic speeds are at a level where a 20mph limit needs additional physical measures to achieve a meaningful speed reduction and aid compliance, and achieve road casualty reduction objectives.
3. A Deputation from the 20s Plenty for Us Campaign group called for a change in policy and adoption of a default 20 mph speed limit on all residential streets – called “Total 20”. They argued that 20 mph speed limits should be implemented through a ‘signs only’ area wide approach without the use of traffic calming features.

4. The Executive Board meeting on February 14th considered the matter and referred it to the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture).
5. Leeds is working closely with partner cities and is learning from the approaches to the implementation of 20 mph schemes elsewhere. The experience shows that even where “Total 20” becomes a city policy, in larger cities a phased approach to implementation is nevertheless necessary. It also indicates that 20 mph speed limits installed with signs only sometimes have to be reviewed and enhanced to achieve their objectives whereas in Leeds very little retrospective action has been required.

Recommendations

6. Members of the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) are requested to:
 - i) note and comment on the content of this report; and
 - ii) endorse the strategy approach to approach being followed to expand the use of 20mph speed limits in Leeds.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 On 13 November 2013 20's Plenty for Us, an organisation campaigning for a national default 20 mph speed limit in residential areas (Total 20), presented a Deputation to Council calling for a "Total 20" approach to become a policy in Leeds, or for the matter to be referred for further scrutiny board.
- 1.2 A report responding to the Deputation was presented the 14th February 2014 Executive Board meeting.. The Board approved the report, and in particular the current approach to the gradual implementation of 20 mph schemes, with particular focus on areas around schools. The Board has also agreed that the matter should be considered by the Scrutiny Board, Transport and Economy.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council's ambition is to have a 20 mph speed limit on all residential streets other than A class principal roads and the majority of distributor road network (B and C class roads) where such reductions would not be practical and other measures would be more appropriate. In this, the Council shares the vision advocated by 20s Plenty for Us and other campaign groups. Like other cities, Leeds recognises the need for a phased implementation of 20 mph speed limits which is dependent on the availability of funding.
- 2.2 The current programme for implementation of 20 mph schemes is based on a cross-city targeted approach to facilitate journeys to school and reduce casualties, in particular amongst pedestrians and children. A recent (2012) Public Health England report points out that the majority of child casualties occur on the journeys to and from school, and advocates introduction of 20 mph speed limits in priority areas. In 2012, following the relaxation of DfT rules on implementing 20 mph speed limits with 'signs only', the Council has embarked on a programme of providing a 20 mph scheme around every school in Leeds.
- 2.3 Overall, 213 schemes were identified around schools, of which half have already been delivered. The table below illustrates the progress made to date.

Years	Number of schemes	Total km
2000- 2012	50 small schemes	330 km of residential streets
2012-14	43 large schemes	180 km of residential streets
2014-2020	Identified 120 large schemes	661 km of residential streets
2014-16	City Connect	70 km of residential streets
	Total	1250 km of streets within the Leeds area boundary (including rural communities)

The total length of roads classed as local streets in Leeds Metropolitan area where 20 mph speed limit would be appropriate is 2000km – approximately two-thirds of the total highway network.

- 2.4 The change in DfT rules has significantly reduced the cost of schemes and allowed the Council to accelerate the rate of delivery. In the years 2000-2012 the area covered by 20 mph speed limit was 20 km². In 2013 another 13 km² were included, with additional 9 km² to be delivered in 2014. In just two years the area covered by 20 mph speed restriction will have increased twofold, whilst the costs of a typical scheme decreased by approximately 65%.
- 2.5 Additional schemes are being provided as part of the externally funded scheme associated with the City Connect Cycle Superhighway (with 20 mph schemes partially funded by Public Health), or as part of the developer contribution, for example through the school expansion programme. Local area funding is also sought – in Otley, it helped achieve comprehensive coverage of the town. Together, they will ensure that 20mph is the legal speed limit on around 70% of all local streets in Leeds. A consolidation phase will also be required to provide 20 mph speed limits on the remainder of residential streets, with the exception of the majority of classified roads/ local distributors.
- 2.6 Our approach to target areas around schools based on accident data is reflected in the marked reduction in casualties (on average a drop of about 50%, as supposed to estimated 10% drop in areas with 'signs only' 20 mph speed limits) in the period of five years post implementation. The reduction in pedestrian, cyclist and child casualties in particular reflects the success of road safety measures, including 20 mph schemes, in Leeds as these casualties are increasing nationally.
- 2.7 The schemes implemented since 2012 comprise a mixture of 'signs only' 20 mph speed limits on those streets where lower speeds are recorded (the majority of streets in any given scheme), and traffic calming features where currently vehicles travel at speeds above 24-27mph. Speed monitoring nationally shows that the 'signs alone' approach achieves a relatively small reduction in vehicular speeds (1-2 mph), unless it is supported by additional measures, and on its own it is unlikely to make most vehicles comply with the new speed restrictions. A pilot introduction of eight 20 mph speed limits with the signs only approach in 2012 in Leeds did not achieve a significant reduction of speeds – in fact, on 11 out of 17 lengths surveyed post implementation the mean traffic speeds have increased.
- 2.8 Other Core Cities have achieved greater reductions where their speed limits are supported by publicity, information and enforcement, for example community Speed Watch, and the reductions achieved were not consistent for all lengths.

3 Main issues

Policy

- 3.1 The distinction in the approaches advocated by 20s Plenty and other campaigns organisation and the current way 20 mph schemes are provided in Leeds lies in the approach to enforcement and accident reduction. Leeds is pursuing the 'zones and limits' approach (with traffic calming features where necessary) which is

designed to achieve a reduction in speeds and be largely self-enforcing. The phased communities approach also provides the chance for each area to participate in the decisions and help determine the shape of the 20 mph speed limit and the use of traffic calming.

Our current approach also offers a degree of flexibility of including sections of busier distributor roads within a 20 mph scheme which would not be possible without traffic calming. An approach based on 'signs only' would achieve faster implementation of 20 mph speed limits, but is likely to delay the provision of any traffic calming features, potentially compromising the effectiveness and credibility of the scheme

Funding and Programme

- 3.2 Availability of funding, either up front or long-term, is the main determining factor for the progress of 20 mph schemes, and consequently for the size of the areas being annually implemented, if the current approach of providing traffic calming features where required is to be maintained. The current estimated cost of rolling out 20 mph schemes (with the present minimal use of engineering features) to all residential areas is estimated to be of the order of £5 - £6 million in a climate where the allocated Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding for local minor schemes is less than £1million per year. Where local authorities are pursuing a similar implementation strategy to Leeds, the estimated costs are similar. A single scheme which uses a mixture of signs and lines and traffic calming where appropriate is likely to cost around £18,000.
- 3.3 This year's LTP allocation allowed the delivery of 15 schemes, but these will be supplemented by additional 28 20 mph schemes associated with the City Connect Cycle Superhighway over the next two years, with the substantial support from Public Health. A 20 mph cordon is being progressed along the route from Seacroft to Leeds City Centre and Bradford, knitting together many of the 20 mph speed limit areas across the city in the next two years.
- 3.4 20 mph schemes are implemented as part of new developments, where the neighbourhood layouts are specifically designed for lower speeds, and in particular in association with the schools expansion programme. In the past, local ward members have also contributed local area funding to implement 20 mph schemes, resulting in additional schemes being progressed alongside the LTP funded programme.

Future proposals

- 3.5 The current implementation programme has the ability to reflect local circumstances and the practical need for speed reduction in areas around schools. Areas are prioritised for implementation annually, based on accident data, with appropriate traffic calming measures tailored to each area based on speed surveys. The main advantage of this approach (over a purely geographical one) is the ability to react to changes in local circumstances, especially any increase in casualties, and also include areas outside the main urban area of the city. The main disadvantage is that it makes it difficult to give certainty over implementation timescales for a particular area beyond the current programme.

- 3.6 However, once the most urgent casualty reduction priorities are addressed, it will be important for schemes to continue to reflect local circumstances and neighbourhood coherence, and to aid healthy living/ active travel, walking and cycling initiatives as well as journeys to school. Factors taken into consideration when developing future implementation programmes would include:
- Addressing the needs of pedestrians and cyclists where traffic speeds are a deterrent in accessing local amenities, such as high street, district centre, shopping parade, parks and green space
 - Aiding community cohesion by creating a consistent speed limit across entire neighbourhoods
 - Engagement with local communities, including schools – where there is evidence of a strong local support for a lowered speed limit, including initiatives to support active travel modes
 - Engagement with partner organisations, including Public Health, and availability of resources outside of the Local Transport plan to implement and promote new speed limits
 - Speed of traffic, particularly the speed of the fastest 15% of motorists; reduction in the speed of that group of motorists is likely to have the greatest impact on the scheme's popularity with residents and efficacy in reducing casualties and intimidation.
 - Indices of health – where the introduction of a lower speed limit would help encourage more active travel modes and facilitate access to amenities by foot or by cycle for those residents most at risk from health conditions linked to sedentary lifestyle, especially where accompanied by targeted local initiatives.
 - Index of multiple deprivation (IMD) - this gives an indication of lack of gardens, density of living and likelihood of children playing in the streets and walking to school. Research has found that children from the lowest socioeconomic group in England and Wales are five times more likely to be injured than those from the highest.

Alternative approaches

- 3.7 A radically alternative approach would be to adopt the strategy advocated by 20s Plenty for Us and implement 20 mph speed limits in large areas of the city with signs and road markings only. This would further minimise the use of resources to achieve even greater coverage. However, due to the sheer size of the city area whilst the Council continues to implement 20 mph speed limits with the essential traffic calming features, it is difficult to achieve a step change in the rate of delivery given the current availability of resources, although alternative schemes prioritisation methods are available
- 3.8 Leeds is working closely with other authorities including the Core Cities group on sharing experience and best working practice on the implementation and operation of 20 mph schemes. A number of these authorities have embraced a

'Total 20' policy of introducing area wide 20 mph speed limits without the use of traffic calming, with area selection based on geographical considerations, evidence of public support, or accident record. The experience of other core cities shows that:

- This approach is initially cheaper (by 50%-75%), but requires continued investment (circa 20% of the initial cost annually) in promotion and publicity to aid compliance;
- Reductions in speed are not consistent, with traffic in many areas continuing to travel at mean speeds above 27mph, potentially undermining credibility of the schemes, and creating the need for enforcement;
- There are currently no speed awareness programmes aimed at drivers breaking a 20 mph speed limit, giving the Police limited enforcement options (penalty points)
- Traffic calming features may need to be added later, generating uncertainty over funding (as experienced by Nottingham, Portsmouth and Brighton and Hove)

3.9 A geographical area-wide approach seems to work where there is ring-fenced funding that allows for a timely implementation of the consecutive phases, and to support initiatives to promote compliance in the following years; otherwise there is a risk that large areas of the city may remain untreated while funding is being sourced. Other Core Cities who implemented 20 mph speed limit in large geographical areas have been largely successful in securing substantial amounts of external funding, often with spending deadlines.

3.10 In Leeds, 20 mph schemes continue to be largely funded through the Local Transport Plan, delivered through three year Implementation Programme, although in recent years other sources of funding have become available. Annual budgets are therefore dependent on the Integrated Programme allocation from the Combined Authority, and have varied from £705,000 for 20 mph schemes in 2009-10 to the current allocation of less than £1m for all road safety schemes.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Residents and Ward Member consultations are carried out for every scheme proposal; these reveal substantial public support, with few, if any individual objections received, which mostly centre around the provision of speed cushions. Individual schemes can be easily adjusted to reflect the views of local communities and stakeholders, without having an impact on the timescale for delivery in other areas.

4.1.2 In order to successfully implement speed restriction schemes and for them to become accepted and adopted by all members of the communities, it is essential to engender strong support and hence compliance with the local speed limit. As the 20's Plenty for Us Campaign have highlighted, to be effective any marketing

campaign needs to be underpinned by a firm understanding of the motivations and barriers and promote compliance as the norm within the communities. The West Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership has extensive experience in such work and increasingly the expertise of Public Health services is being sought to improve the delivery and effectiveness of road user behaviour change programmes.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment has been prepared for 20 mph speed reduction schemes around schools and residential areas and is attached as an appendix. The assessment identified the following key positive impacts:

- Make it more pleasant and safer to walk and cycle, encouraging a healthier lifestyle
- Improve the quality of life for the local community
- Provide safer passage while crossing the road for all pedestrians, but particularly beneficial for those with a mobility impairment, disabled people, parents supporting pushchairs, and younger and older people

4.2.2 No negative impacts were identified for any of the protected equality characteristics. Slight negative impacts were slightly increased journey times and potential impact of traffic calming features if installed incorrectly.

4.2.3 The Impact Assessment stresses that the benefits of the schemes far outweigh any potential disadvantages and has not recommended any adjustments to the current process.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The Best City ambition is to improve life for the people of Leeds and make our city a better place. Twenty miles-per-hour schemes contribute to this ambition by improving the safety and quality of life of Leeds residents by enabling safe pedestrian and cycling journeys in local communities and reducing traffic collisions to make a specific contribution to the Best City for Communities and Child Friendly City ambitions.

4.3.2 The ambition for Leeds is that all schools and their local communities across the city will ultimately have the opportunity of a 20 mph speed limit in their local area. This accords with the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan objective "To enhance the quality of life of people living in, working in and visiting West Yorkshire." More extensive 20 mph limits will support greater opportunities for walking and cycling for all and help children especially travel independently through providing safer streets in their neighbourhood and to school .

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The delivery of 20 mph speed limit schemes forms part of the programmes for improving road safety contained in the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (WYLTP) and through the planning process as part of considerations for new developments. Such schemes generally show high value for money both for the direct benefits to road safety and their indirect benefits for active travel and health. The potential value for money of such schemes has been enhanced by the changes to Government guidelines, which have allowed around a two-thirds reduction in schemes costs, however the full benefits can only be captured if speeds are reduced and the Council's programmes aim to reflect this. The minimal approach to traffic calming features, together with Police support, maximises driver compliance while minimising cost without the need for the schemes to be re-visited or continued to be supported.
- 4.4.2 This report has potential implications for resources in the next phases of the implementation of West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, depending on the nature of recommendations and the decision of the Scrutiny Board.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications. The report is not eligible for Call-In.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 It is anticipated that the current and planned programmes will deliver 20 mph speed limits across the city in a way which is inclusive and effective in improving road safety. By ensuring effective engagement, careful design which relates to local communities and their needs the risks of objections are minimised and similarly the most effective use of finance is also achieved. A more blanket wide area based approach, such as "Total 20" which has not been used in Leeds, runs the risk that measures are not always effective and could lead to safety issues being overlooked at locations which actually need features or early improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The debate which the 20s plenty for Us campaign has provoked has been a positive one and as such the Council shares the vision for the widespread and early introduction of 20mph speed limits to our residential areas.
- 5.2 While the Local Transport Plan continues to be the main source of funding for 20 mph schemes, the phased approach is likely to remain as the main mechanism for delivering the 20 mph schemes across Leeds. Greater coverage and faster delivery could only be achieved if schemes were no longer provided with essential traffic calming features. Whenever possible, opportunities are being taken to use other resources such as developer contribution to enhance the programme.
- 5.3 With the current approach, a more comprehensive and speedy treatment of large areas of Leeds would only be possible if a significant new funding stream became available. In the absence of this, it is unlikely that a changed prioritisation method would make much practical difference to the number of streets receiving the 20 mph coverage annually, and could lead to fewer benefits in the short term.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) are requested to:

- i) note and comment on the content of this report; and
- ii) endorse the strategy approach being followed to expand the use of 20mph speed limits in Leeds.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Executive Board Report

7.2 Equality Impact Assessment

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.