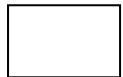

Report of the Director of City Development

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 18 March 2008

Subject: 20 MPH ZONES PROGRAMME UPDATE AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Electoral Wards Affected: All



Ward Members Consulted
(referred to in the report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

☐

Community Cohesion

☐

Narrowing the Gap

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the introduction of 20 mph zones in Leeds as part of the Local Transport Plan 2006-11 and as previously submitted to the Scrutiny Board.

The report details measures being examined to allow the programme to be expanded and accelerated through the Local Area Agreement and by making greater use of 20 mph speed limits, as well as the established 20 mph zone approach.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provide an update on ongoing work to develop and implement the Local Transport Plan 20 mph zone programme following the report to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Details of the 20 mph zone programme were reported to the July meeting of this Board.
- 2.2 By way of background to this report, the purpose of the area wide approach to 20 mph zones and speed limits is to extend the reach of the road casualty reduction programme to local roads and residential areas of the city. Whilst the approaches used to identify road injury "sites" and "lengths for concern" typically account for around 30% of the casualties that occur in the Leeds district annually, the remaining 70% of casualties generally take place across the wider network in a dispersed and unpredictable pattern that cannot be readily targeted with site specific schemes. Twenty mph zones therefore target those areas with raised road injury rates where

the distribution and disparate nature of the accidents indicates that a lower speed limit supported by traffic calming measures will be an effective approach to casualty reduction. At the same time 20 mph zones help to address child injuries by targeting the journey to school and a child's local community rather than being restricted to the immediate environs of schools where less than 1% of child injuries occur.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 It is recognized that expanding the coverage of carefully selected and well designed 20 mph zones and speed limit areas can make a significant contribution to road casualty reduction and bring an improved sense of road safety to local communities. A review into the technical approach to the delivery of such schemes has been initiated and an officer workshop in October 2007 has examined how the present programme can be accelerated to increase the output of such schemes for the remainder of the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) period.
- 3.2 A particular focus of the review work has been on how the regulations on 20 mph speed limits and the creation of 20 mph zones can be used more efficiently, an issue about which Members have requested further information.
- 3.3 There are two ways of introducing 20 speed limits:
- i) By Order as a freestanding speed limit to be signed and enforced in the same way as any conventional speed limit (e.g. entry signs and repeater signs throughout the route or area concerned). Typically this approach can be expected to reduce average speeds by around 3-4% without either enforcement or the provision of additional measures. As such it has not been widely used as an approach to achieving area wide speed reductions either in Leeds or elsewhere, with the notable exception of Portsmouth.
- In Portsmouth the City Council is pursuing an initiative to implement 20 mph speed limits for "almost all" residential roads in the city. This programme, which the City are understood to be half way through, is expected to be complete later this year at a cost of £475,000 over two years. The scheme has been made possible by the geography and character of Portsmouth which is essentially a self contained "island" with housing which consists mostly of a dense grid pattern of terraced streets, many of which are narrow and heavily parked. As such for the most part speeds are already quite low and within the parameters in which the speed limit only approach can be practically applied and expected to work on a self enforcing basis.
- It is also worth noting that should it be necessary to supplement a 20 mph speed limit with physical measures, unless the area is converted into a zone, to comply with the traffic signing rules it will be necessary to specifically sign the traffic calming measures wherever they are used. Generally speaking the support for 20 mph zones and speed limits by the police service is on the basis that they will be self enforcing.
- ii) By Order as a 20 mph zone with traffic calming measures in place in line with DfT regulations to ensure self enforcement and therefore remove any dependence for external enforcement (although the Police consultation requirement remains).

3.4 The initial conclusions of the review work are as follows:

- i) To investigate the wider use of 20 mph speed limits which are implemented through signing which can in appropriate circumstances obviate the need for the sometimes extensive traffic calming measures required for a self enforcing 20 mph zone. An location where this approach is being applied is the town and district centre programme scheme for Yeadon High Street. Other sites in the LTP forward programme where existing speeds and road character would permit to this approach are being identified.
- ii) To seek greater flexibility for the design of 20 mph zones through the ongoing negotiations for the Leeds Local Area Agreement. The intention is to achieve local flexibility in the traffic calming requirements associated with schemes by securing a variation through local agreement to the requirements of the Traffic Calming Regulations. Further discussions are to be held with the Government Office concerning this proposal as part of the LAA negotiation round.
- iii) As a matter of course for each scheme proposal the traffic calming proposals will be reviewed and the measures will be targeted carefully at the locations within areas where they can have the greatest effect.

3.5 In considering the above approach, due regard has been given to the work reported above in terms of Portsmouth. As Members may be aware Leeds is both a larger and more dispersed city than Portsmouth. Whilst Leeds too has a very significant area of dense residential terraced housing with associated grid street patterns, this is intermixed with more modern suburban layouts where the speed of traffic can be expected to be significantly higher. The implications for Leeds of the Portsmouth project for Leeds are that whilst relying solely on speed limits could play a greater role in the Council's strategy, traffic calmed zones are likely to remain a very significant part of the overall programme. On faster roads the evidence suggests that a change in the speed limit will not of itself be sufficient to influence driver behaviour enough to achieve road casualty reduction objectives.

4 Legal And Resource Implications

4.1 This report raises no specific legal and resource implications.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This report has provided an update to work on the 20 mph zones programme with additional information about the various approaches to delivering such schemes within national regulations and legislation.

6 Recommendations

7.1 Members are requested to note and comment on the contents of this report.