

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE – 5<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2004**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

**TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To apprise the Area Committee of criteria for introducing Traffic Calming Measures including the use of Speed Cameras.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At its last meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2003, this Area Committee called for a report on the criteria for introducing Traffic Calming Measures including the use of Speed Cameras.
- 2.2 Traffic calming measures can come in many forms, including road humps, gateways, chicanes, rumble devices, advisory signs, speed limits, speed cameras, etc., although road humps and speed cameras tend to be the measures most usually requested by local residents as their preferred option for addressing the problems that they have identified.
- 2.3 Road Hump Regulations were first made in 1983 and whilst there have been a number of amendments to the legislation since that time, the main value of road humps lies in the contribution that they can make to the reduction or prevention of road accidents where speed is, or likely to be, a major factor in accidents along a particular road.
- 2.4 Whereas the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order relating to a prohibition of traffic will directly affect traffic flows, the introduction of road humps are not, in themselves, a traffic management measure to reduce the volume of traffic using a particular road. A reduction in traffic speeds may, however, lead to that road being less attractive, particularly for rat-running traffic, so that some drivers then seek alternative routes.
- 2.5 Fixed Speed Cameras have also proved to be a very effective deterrent to speeding motorists and they have generally proved to be most successful when used over a longer length of highway as part of a route based initiative or elsewhere in isolation where a series of accidents have occurred within a short distance of each other.

- 2.6 However, following the introduction of the Government's Cost Recovery Programme and the successful application by the West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership (the 'Partnership'), the use of fixed speed cameras across all of the West Midlands Authorities has, since the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002, been subject to the operation and management by the 'Partnership'.
- 2.7 This position does not prevent individual Councils putting forward their own suggestions for sites that it considers may be suitable for the introduction of speed cameras but the final decision will ultimately be down to the 'Partnership' which has already indicated that the following parameters will form the fundamental basis of their considerations:
- There must be a recorded personal injury accident problem.
  - Speed should be the primary causation of the recorded accidents.
  - The speed at which 85% of the traffic is travelling is excessive when compared to the prevailing speed limit.
  - There are no alternative options in the form of physical measures that could provide a suitable and/or effective deterrent to the speeding issues.
- 2.8 Opportunities to use mobile speed cameras provide a more flexible approach for the Council to complement the speed enforcement initiatives of the Local Divisional Police and although, by their very nature, they will be utilised at many more sites on a less frequent basis than their fixed speed camera counterparts. They can, therefore, in combination with the introduction of permanent 'Police Camera Enforcement' signing, provide an effective deterrent and alternative means of carrying out a traffic calming scheme where other measures may not be appropriate.
- 2.9 However, with regard to any of the different types of initiative that have been mentioned above, the Council currently introduces traffic calming measures only as part of a local safety scheme where the emphasis is very much related to a reduction in the recorded number of personal injury accidents. Additionally, traffic calming measures may be considered as part of a safer routes to school initiative where the measures have been identified following consultation with the school and schoolchildren as part of a process that aims to improve road safety and encourage more sustainable modes of transport to that of the current trend where there is a reliance on the motor car – most notable in the form of the 'school run'.
- 2.10 Funding for either type of initiative is, however, dependent upon the annual Transport Capital Settlement and, particularly in relation to the local safety schemes programme, the Council's aims are the same as the Government's targets in that between the years 2000 and 2010 they will achieve:
- a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.
  - A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured.

- A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres.

2.11 In relation to the Council's programme of local safety schemes, it is not unusual for there to be as many as four times the number of requests for schemes to be introduced than the level of resources available and against this background the Council has, therefore, through necessity, adopted an assessment approach that enables it to consider an order of relative priority that is based on criteria which primarily seeks to reduce the recorded number of personal injury accidents but also takes on board factors that will address:

- those sites where there the severity of accidents has resulted in serious or fatal injuries
- the need to recognise the needs of vulnerable road users, particularly children under the age of 16 and pedestrians/cyclists.
- Department of Transport guidance that Local Authorities should investigate and consider the underlying factors for higher road casualty rates in their disadvantaged/deprived areas.
- the relative effectiveness of different scheme options and the relative cost of these schemes in relation to their predicted accident reduction.

2.12 Thereafter, once the assessment process has been completed for sites that are considered suitable for the introduction of a local safety scheme, a proposed programme of works will initially be considered by the Lead and 'Shadow' Lead Members for Transportation before being submitted to the Executive for approval as part of the Highways Minor Works Capital Programme.

### **3.0 PROPOSALS**

3.1 That this Area Committee notes the background that is taken into consideration during the assessment process for identifying sites that may be suitable for the implementation of traffic calming measures.

#### **4.0 FINANCE**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5.0 LAW**

5.1 The Council has statutory responsibility for the promotion of road safety measures to reduce the number and severity of road accident casualties under the provision of Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988.

5.2 The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.

5.3 The Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991, requires the installation of road humps to be advertised on-street and in the local newspaper for objections.

5.4 Traffic Regulation Orders are made under powers contained in Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

5.5 Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

5.6 The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.

5.7 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

#### **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

6.1 This report accords with the policies of the Council on Equal Opportunities.

#### **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the proposals set out in Section 3 of this report be approved.

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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN THE COMPILATION OF THIS REPORT**

1. "Tomorrow's Roads: Safer for Everyone" published in 2000.
2. Department for Transport Circulars and Traffic Advisory Leaflets
3. Dudley MBC's. assessment procedure for Local Safety Schemes