

Report to Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 20 February 2013

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. PT01.13

Title: Speed limit reviews – process from 2013 onwards

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Author: Jon Collett, Alliance Service Leader,
Transport for Buckinghamshire

Contact officer: Sue Brown 01296 387197

Local members affected: All

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

With the recent installation of new speed limits in 'Area 14', the countywide speed limit review has now been completed. All of Buckinghamshire's public roads have been assessed in accordance with National policy and new speed limits have been installed where appropriate.

This report explains the process for dealing with requests for further requests for changes to speed limits.

The County Council has competing demands for resources and is unable to justify its original aspiration to complete 'follow-up' speed limit reviews across the whole County using a dedicated funding allocation for this purpose. Therefore, new requests for speed limit changes will need to be funded at a local level.

Public consultation on some follow up reviews has already taken place in Speed Limit Review Areas 4, 6, 7 and 9 (See countywide map of speed limit areas -**Appendix A**) However, as these consultations took place in 2008-09 the proposals may no longer be relevant to or



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required by local communities. Therefore, because of the County Council's significant funding pressures it is recommended, (with only a few exceptions listed within this report), that any previously proposed limits will not be progressed any further, unless they are identified as a local priority and subsequently funded at a local level.

In addition, the Casualty Reduction Team may identify a speed limit change as part of an accident remedial scheme. These changes would be introduced using dedicated Transport for Buckinghamshire local safety scheme funding.

Recommendation

- **From 2013, all requests for changes to speed limits will, (with the exception of a few legal anomalies and other specified speed limits as detailed in this Report), be funded either:-**
 - **directly by individual Parish/Town Councils, or**
 - **by a Local Area Forum via the Local Priorities Budget process, or**
 - **from independent sources or**
 - **as part of a casualty reduction scheme**
 - **or a Section 106 developer funded agreement**
- **Key Decision T08.10 (Area 4), (*Background Paper 3*), is superseded by this Report and therefore its recommendation to implement follow-up limits in Area 4 will no longer apply.**
- **There will be a formal application process and fee to manage and evaluate requests for speed limit changes. This will include 20mph speed limits and Quiet Lane proposals.**
- **Irrespective of the funding source, requests for speed limit changes will only be consulted upon and implemented if they comply with the National guidance on setting speed limits.**
- **This policy should be reviewed within 3 years of the publication of this Report.**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

1. The countywide speed limit review started in 2003 as part of the Buckinghamshire Speed Management Strategy which was approved by the County Council Cabinet on 16 December 2002. (*Background Paper 4*). Buckinghamshire was divided into 14 speed limit review areas (**Appendix A**) and in 2012 the countywide review was completed when new speed limits were installed in Area 14.
2. The review not only complied with the Department for Transport's requirement in DfT Circular 01/2006 'Setting local speed limits', (*Background Paper 1*), to review the speed limits on all of their A & B roads, but extended this remit to include all public roads in Buckinghamshire.
3. It was intended that a 'follow-up' review would also take place for each speed limit review area after the first set of speed limit changes had been installed. These additional area reviews would take into account public feedback, traffic speed data and road accident trends in recommending any further speed limit changes.
4. This process was completed for some areas, with 'follow-up' speed limit changes installed in Area 2 in 2005; Area 3 in January 2009 and Area 5 in March 2009.

5. Public consultation on other proposed follow- up & supplementary speed limits took place in Winter 2008 for the A40, (Area 9), between Beaconsfield and Holtspur, and in Spring 2009 for Areas 4, 6 and 7, but funding pressures on the County Council and resulting resource issues prevented further progress. For legal reasons, because more than two years has elapsed since these proposals were first advertised for consultation, implementation of any of these proposed speed limits cannot now take place without further public consultation. (Paragraph 16 (2) of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 refers- see *Background Paper 5.*)
6. A Key Decision Report (Ref T08.10) for the Area 4 follow-up proposals was approved on 28th June 2010(*Background Paper 3*).The recommendation to install the approved speed limit changes in Area 4 by Autumn 2010 was not possible. The new way forward on follow-up speed limit reviews means that the Area 4 recommendations will not now be implemented and Key Decision T08.10 is therefore formally superseded by this current report.
7. Key Decision Reports were not published for the Areas 6 & 7 follow-up proposals. As a result, as for Area 4, no further action on these proposed speed limits will now take place unless prioritised and funded at a local level.
8. Funding previously allocated in 2012/13, to deliver follow up speed limit reviews, will be used in 2013 to complete specific tasks. These consist of a number of previously proposed speed limits in Area 4 and Area 9, (as listed below), where a commitment had been given prior to November 2012 that they would be funded from the speed limit review budget. In addition, specific legal anomalies which need resolution will also be dealt with. These specific tasks are as follows:-
 - **Outstanding 'follow- up review' proposals:-**
 - **Area 9: A40 Beaconsfield to Holtspur 40mph** speed limit (to include B4440 Wooburn Green Lane).This will comprise re-consultation, followed by implementation if public consultation feedback supports it.
 - **Area 4: A4128 30 mph Great Kingshill / Cryers Hill.** This will comprise re-consultation followed by implementation, if public consultation feedback supports it.
 - **Legal anomalies:**
 - **Area 4: Winchmore Hill 30mph speed limit extension:** signing issue
 - **A40 Studley Green/ U624 Old Dashwood Hill–** signing revisions
 - **Mill Lane, Twyford –** redefinition of length of 30mph speed limit
 - **Wilton Lane, Jordans-** redefinition of length of 30mph speed limit
 - **Wheeler Avenue estate, Tylers Green-** 30mph limit (currently no formal speed limit)
9. The Casualty Reduction Team may also identify a change in speed limit as an appropriate accident remedial solution for a road length .These speed limit changes will be progressed using local safety scheme funding.
10. There may also be occasions where a developer will fund a change to a speed limit under a Section 106 Agreement
11. Funding for any other already proposed 'follow-up' review limits and for any other requests for speed limit changes will need to be sourced at a local level- either directly from a Parish or Town Council, or from the Local Priorities Budget process via a Local Area Forum of communities , or from independent sources.

12. Irrespective of the funding source, all proposed speed limit changes will be required to meet the criteria set out within the current Department for Transport (DfT) speed limit policy and full public consultation will be required. Revised National guidance is anticipated to be published early in 2013 (See *Background Paper 2* for the DfT's draft proposals consulted upon in 2012).
13. An application process is being developed by Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) to manage new requests for speed limit changes. This will consist of an application form together with information on National guidance and the procedure for changing a speed limit. Once this pack is ready for use, all Members and local councils will be notified.
14. A request to change a speed limit will be made via a Parish or Town Council, (or via local County Councillor in areas where no Parish or Town Council exists), to ensure that there is local support for the request. Requests will be made by completing an application form and will cost £100 (to be reviewed annually). This fee will enable the request to be assessed, which will involve checking existing traffic and crash data, to compare the characteristics of the road length(s) with the National criteria and to consider whether a speed limit change is the most appropriate solution.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

15. To continue with implementation of the follow-up proposals previously advertised for speed limit areas 4, 6, and 7 would use resources which may be more appropriate to be directed towards more recent local priorities, especially in view of the additional financial cost imposed by a requirement to carry out another public consultation.

If, however, as proposed in this report, local communities determine which speed limit proposals are of such local importance as to be given funding, this will ensure that only those proposals which still attract considerable local support will proceed.

It will also enable local communities countywide to suggest alternative speed limits to those which were previously advertised for public consultation or to use the resources for other local priorities.

C. Resource implications

16. Expertise in all aspects of speed limit assessment and implementation already exists within TfB.
The cost of changing a speed limit varies from one road to another. However, a typical cost of implementing a new speed limit is in the region of £5,000 - £7,000. This amount includes preparatory work, public consultation, legal fees and installation of relevant signs.
17. Officer time for processing the applications and assessing whether requested speed limits are appropriate (according to National guidance) will be charged to the Parish /LAF making the request based on an assessment of the time taken to undertake this activity. All other aspects, including, for example, traffic surveys; public consultation and installation and officer time for these activities would also be funded by the Parish, LAF or other scheme sponsor.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

18. The decision not to continue in full with the follow-up reviews in Areas 4,6 and 7 will ensure that council funds are directed only towards those schemes where there is significant local support. It will mean that funds are not spent unnecessarily on speed

limits for which local support is no longer there. It will also release officer time to set up the new application process and to deal with new requests with minimum delay.

E. Legal implications

19. If the speed limit anomalies identified in paragraph 9 are not resolved, this could have a negative impact on the enforcement of those or adjacent speed limits and would not reflect well on the county council's fulfilment of its responsibilities as the Highway Authority.
20. Advice was sought from Legal Services as to the necessity of re-advertising those speed limit changes which were previously advertised in 2008/09. It was confirmed that these limits cannot be implemented without further public consultation as the statutory 2 years had passed.

F. Property implications

None

G. Other implications/issues

None other than those already indicated elsewhere in this report.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

21. As part of the 'Think Councillor' process, Peter Hardy, (Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation), sent an email to all Members on 5th December 2012. (*Appendix B*). This outlined the revised process for speed limit changes and asked Members to respond with any comments by 14 December 2012. Comments were received from just 4 Members all of whom were in support of the new process.
22. Parish & Town Councils were also informed of the new policy, (*Appendix C*), either by email on 20th December 2012 or by letter, (for those without email), during January 2013. Local councils were provided, where applicable, with details of the limits previously proposed for their local area. (*See Appendix D*). No adverse comments have been received to date.

I. Communication issues

23. Elected Members, Parish & Town Councils will be contacted by email or letter with the outcome of this Report. They will also be informed when the speed limit requests' application form and accompanying processes have been developed. In the meantime, a formal record is being kept by the Casualty Reduction Team of any petitions and requests for speed limit changes received from 01/01/2013.
24. The new process, if approved, will also be communicated directly to all Local Area Forums, Transport for Buckinghamshire officers, Customer Services and will be publicised on the County Council's web pages.

J. Progress Monitoring

25. Responses from Elected Members, Parish & Town Councils relating to the new procedure will be recorded and brought to the attention of the Cabinet Member /Senior Management team as appropriate.

K. Review

25. The policy forming part of this decision should be reviewed within 3 years of the Publication of this Report.. The fee for assessing the suitability for changing a speed limit will be assessed annually.

Appendices:

- A. Map showing the 14 speed limit review areas
- B. Letter from Cabinet Member Peter Hardy to Members 5th December 2012 re update on speed limit changes
- C. Letter/email to Parish/Town Councils re update on speed limit changes
- C1 in Area 4
 - C2 in Area 6
 - C3 in Area 7
 - C4 in Area 8
 - C5 in Area 9
 - C6 Areas 10-14
- D. Detailed information on previously proposed limits:-
- D1 in Area 4
 - D2 in Area 6
 - D3 in Area 7
- E. Further information for members

Background Papers

1. DfT Circular 01/2006 Setting local speed limits
See DfT webpages at:- <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/circular-1-06/circular-1-2006.pdf>
2. DfT consultation July 2012 on revision of DfT Speed Limit Circular.
See DfT webpages at:- <https://consultation.dft.gov.uk/dft/speed-limit-circular>
3. Key Decision Report T08.10 June 2010 Area 4 Post-Implementation Review and Speed Limit Changes <http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1998>
4. Buckinghamshire Speed Management Strategy approved by the County Council Cabinet on 16 December 2002. (Agenda item 7)
<http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20021216/Agenda/Agenda.htm>
5. The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders(Procedure) (England and Wales)Regulations 1996
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/2489/contents/made>

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 19 February 2013. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk