

20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update scrutiny on a revised approach for implementing 20mph speed limits across the borough.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Existing 20mph zones within the Borough have been installed as funding and public support has allowed, either through planning applications or formal requests from local residents and/or local members.
- 2.2. There has previously been a commitment by the Council to the roll out of 20mph zones at the Council Meeting of 15th July 2021, where it was resolved to “establish an all-party working group to seek to implement a Borough-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads”.
- 2.3. Further to this, the then-Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport submitted a report commissioned by this working group, the Slower Speed Initiatives Report (SS32), to Cabinet in March 2022. Cabinet resolved to approve the package of recommendations detailed in Sections 24 and 25 of this report, with section 24.1.2 stating that... *“The Working Party recommend(s) the introduction of 20mph speed limits/zones/quiet lanes in residential areas where this was supported by local councillors, residents, and businesses, the assumption being that 20mph limits/zones would be identified by Councillors and officers to either add to existing schemes or introduce new ones as soon as possible, either through external additional funds or incorporated as part of other significant highway investment”*
- 2.4. There is a desire to undertake a roll out of 20mph zones to other appropriate areas, with prioritisation based on specific criteria informed by local road characteristics and data gathered on motorist response to existing speed limits.
- 2.5. GMP have traditionally not enforced 20mph speed limits and have recommended that there should be physical calming measures to slow down vehicles down. Consequently, Stockport’s approach has been to not implement 20mph zones or areas without traffic calming where it is believed that average speeds are well in excess of 20mph. This is on the basis of wanting to maintain the credibility of speed restrictions, i.e. not introducing limits that were known to be unrealistic and unenforceable.
- 2.6. However, an investigation has taken place to review the impact of speed limits when no additional traffic calming is installed.

- 2.7. Subsequently, Stockport Council has conducted studies in two separate areas in the Borough on the effectiveness of different highway measures in implementing 20mph zones on residential roads.

3. Study Overview and Conclusions

- 3.1. In 2022, Stockport Council were awarded the sum of £19,000 from the Integrated Transport Budget to conduct a series of 20mph zone study trials in the Borough. The aim of these study trials is to obtain localised data on what types of 20mph speed limit interventions achieve in altering vehicular speeds, in order to inform any change in how we assess areas as suitable for 20mph speed limits and what type of intervention is suitable for those areas.
- 3.2. Three adjacent areas were selected for these 20mph zone study trials, all within the Reddish South Ward, with each area trialling a different traffic calming or traffic management approach in order to provide relevant data for comparison. A fourth area was also identified at Mill Lane.
- 3.3. Each of the three areas comprised of different measures; a new 20mph speed limit with new vertical traffic calming measures on the residential streets surrounding Elisabeth Mill, a new 20mph speed limit without vertical calming, but with signage and road markings on the streets to the south of Longford Road West, and a study of the existing residential roads to the north of Longford Road West which includes a mixture of existing 20mph with vertical calming and 30mph speed limits.
- 3.4. A comparative analysis was undertaken between the different areas to understand how different levels of intervention impact on vehicle speeds.
- 3.5. The results have to be presented as two sets of results as a comparison is not possible between all areas equally:
- Elisabeth Mill, North Longford West and South Longford Road West can all be fairly compared as the method of data collection is consistent; and
 - The results around Mill Lane, whilst useful in providing some individual evidence, were less conclusive due to the more limited traffic assessments.
- 3.6. Based on a comparison of the results from the surveys around three areas of Elisabeth Mill, North Longford West and South Longford Road West shows the following summary results
- 30mph speed limits result in both higher average total and average 85th percentile speeds than 20mph speed limits, regardless of whether vertical traffic calming is present.
 - Average speed across all roads, regarding of limits or restrictions, was observed at 18.0mph
 - Average 85th speed across all roads, regardless of limits or restrictions, was observed at 22.6mph
 - Average speed across all 20mph speed roads was observed at 17.5mph
 - Average speed across all 30mph speed limit roads was observed at 18.6mph

- 3.7. The method of data collection for the Mill Lane surveys means that the results need to be interpreted in isolation, rather than with the results of the three ITB surveys:
- Average speeds in the signs and road markings only 20mph speed limits areas all demonstrated higher than 20mph average and 85th% speeds when compared the sinusoidal traffic calmed areas
 - Of the 20mph speed limits with signing and road markings only, only one of the sites went above the 24mph Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) limit for enforcement
- 3.8. Across all the study areas that had 20mph speed limits with only 20mph signs and road markings, the average speeds were still under, or on, the 24mph ACPO level for enforcement. In addition, in 50% of the surveyed cases, the 85th% speed was also under the ACPO enforcement limit. Whilst the evidence shows that 20mph speed limits, complemented with traffic calming are more effective, this evidence suggests that 20mph speed limits with only signs and road markings do have an influence in maintaining lower speeds.
- 3.9. The results show that a reduction from 30mph to 20mph speed limits results in a reduction in both average speeds and 85th% speeds.
- 3.10. Overall, the study has shown that introducing 20mph does slow traffic down. However, where average speeds are originally higher the reduction is not enough without traffic calming to support the introduction of a 20mph limit without undermining the credibility of speed limits.

4. **Proposed Approach**

- 4.1. It is proposed to use following guidance for the introduction of 20mph speed limits:
- Speeds under 20mph observed: if the 85th% speeds are observed under 20mph then any new 20mph speed limit would not need to be supported by vertical or horizontal traffic calming measures.
 - Speeds between 20-24mph: if the 85th% speeds are observed between this range then any new 20mph speed limit would not need to be supported by vertical or horizontal traffic calming measures. These speeds would not be enforceable under the current ACPO guidance and, evidence shows, that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit is likely to slow vehicles down.
 - Speeds above 24mph: any speed survey that identifies 85th% speeds in the enforceable range should be considered for delivery with traffic calming measures.
- 4.2. Prior roll-out of 20mph speed limit areas concentrated around schools and locations with high foot fall such as in District Centres. In order to maximise benefit from investment in existing and future Bee Network routes and facilities for active travel in the Borough it is proposed the next roll-out of 20mph zones in Stockport should also give consideration to around current or proposed 'Beeline'-standard active travel routes.

4.3. When considering new planning applications for residential estates, application of 20mph limits on those streets should be the standard requirement, with exceptions by negotiation. This will ensure that driving speeds of 20mph on residential and low traffic street across Stockport is the expectation. The new guidance should enable clearer decision making when councillors request to use their delegated budgets for new 20mph limit streets or zones. The council will look to implement 20mph limits on residential streets in areas where significant alterations are being undertaken, unless there are reasons why they would be unsuitable.

5. Recommendation

5.1. The scrutiny committee are asked to note and comment on the report.

6. Financial And Risk Assessment Considerations

6.1. None

7. Legal Considerations

7.1. Requirement to implement schemes within the requirements and duties placed on the Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980.

8. Human Resources Impact

8.1. There is no expected human resource impact.

9. Equalities Impact

9.1. Related equality assessment needs will be undertaken as the project is progressed to insure it meets the needs of the equalities act.

10.Environmental Impact

10.1. None

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles on Tel: 0161-474-4466 or by email on Jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles on telephone number Tel: 07356 120 423 or alternatively email jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk