

# Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee

## 26 February 2024

### 20 MPH Policy

#### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

The purpose of this report is to review the policy in its first year of operation and to highlight the ongoing review by the Department for Transport (DfT) into 20mph.

It does not seek to go into the detail on individual application decisions.

The policy is aimed at introducing new 20mph schemes, in urban areas and village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists and to improve quality of life.

#### Recommendation:

1. To review progress on policy delivery.
2. To note the potential for new national guidance on 20mph for England.

#### Reason for Recommendation:

1. To comply with the recommendation to scrutinise the delivery of the policy 12 months after implementation.

2. To be cognisant of the DfT '*The Plan for Drivers*' ongoing review.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Dorset Councils (DC) Cabinet of 1 November 2022 approved the 20mph policy after a recommendation by the Place and Resources Overview Committee of 6 October 2022. This was the first time that DC had agreed a bespoke policy for 20mph.
- 1.2 Chairman of the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee requested a 6-month progress update, and this was presented to committee at the meeting of 25 May 2023 with no recommendations being made.
- 1.3 Cabinet requested that this committee should scrutinise the operational delivery of the policy 12 months after implementation which will then allow for any amendments or changes to be recommended.
- 1.4 The policy has sought to ensure that 20mph schemes give the maximum benefit for the affected communities within urban areas and village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists and those using a mobility scooter, wheelchair, or similar mobility aid.
- 1.5 The policy has provided officers with a framework for dealing with community led requests and has also enabled officers to progress 20mph schemes as part of a highway improvement measure and to actively promote 20mph schemes, where appropriate, on new residential housing developments.

2. **20mph Limit or Zone**

- 2.1 During operational delivery there has been some uncertainty from communities around the terminology used to describe a limit or zone. This is understandable because there used to be a very clear distinction.

*20mph zones* require any point in the road to be within 50m of a traffic calming measure which used to be defined quite strictly as physical calming such as vertical (speed humps) or horizontal deflections (chicanes, road narrowings). This reliance on largely physical calming reduced the need for signage but created new risks and increased costs and the requirement was therefore relaxed by DfT. Current guidance allows for repeater signs, carriageway roundels and mini roundabouts to also be classed as traffic

calming, however, a *20mph zone* would still require the installation of at least one physical calming measure.

*20mph limits* only require each point in the road to be within 50m of a repeater sign that informs the driver that the speed limit is 20mph.

- 2.2 A careful assessment is always carried out when considering whether an application can meet its objectives by use of a limit or zone with all new schemes needing to be compliant with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

### 3. **Promotion of policy**

- 3.1 Speed limit changes can be emotive subjects. Media coverage was generated during the development of the policy which was lengthy and necessarily delayed due to the Covid pandemic. The Communication Team provided a news release shared through the usual media channels promoting the policy once it had been agreed by Cabinet.
- 3.2 A website was created allowing public access to the policy and a new online application form. N.B.: an application can only be made by a DC Member, Parish or Town Council.
- 3.3 Engagement took place with the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils through the webinar of 7 February 2023 which at that time was the highest attended with 62 delegates.
- 3.4 The policy has also been promoted through regular liaison with DC Members and routine engagement with Parish and Town Councils.

### 4. **Levels of interest**

- 4.1 From policy implementation until 31 December 2023 there have been **25** applications with **24** other locations having expressed an interest. Other locations are actively considering an application with overall interest likely to remain high.

The first community application was received 3hrs after policy sign off.

### 5. **Operational delivery**

- 5.1 A one team approach has been taken to delivery with different sections of the highways service taking a leadership role.

- **Road Safety Team** lead on delivery of the community led applications and 20mph safety schemes linked to collision reduction.
- **Transport Planning Team** together with the **Highways Improvement Team** lead on 20mph schemes linked to Active Travel.
- **Highways Development Team** lead on 20mph for new housing developments.
- Other sections of the service including local **Community Highways Team, Transport Studies & Data Team, Traffic Regulation Team,** and **Sign Shop Team** play an important role in the assessment process and delivery.

5.2 A phased approach has been taken to community led applications with the process being supported by the creation of an oversight group known as the 20mph Panel.

The panel decide on what applications should progress to formal public consultation as part of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) making process and will consider which applications reach sufficient priority for funding.

The panel consists of the following members:

- Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
- Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Travel
- Transport Planning Team Leader
- Transport Planning Implementation Manager
- Road Safety Manager

5.3 Phase one relates to applications submitted before the 1 March 2023.

The panel of 27 April 2023 met to consider eight applications submitted during this period and agreed that five applications met criteria, one did not meet criteria, one required further investigative work and the other application was withdrawn to consider an alternative application for a Speed Indicator Device within the existing 30mph.

The five locations that met criteria were:

- Bridport Town Centre
- Langton Matravers
- Pimperne – *not including the A354*
- Wimborne Town Centre – *extension to the current 20mph*

- Winfrith Newburgh

After primary consultation had been conducted these applications progressed to formal public consultation.

A combined TRO for all locations was produced for the consultation to reduce costs. Consultation began on 12 October 2023 and received 319 responses. There was a **78%** majority in favour compared to those that objected with a small number of general comments.

Those supporting 20mph raised the following key themes:

- Will improve road safety.
- Will improve the environment.
- Will reduce noise.
- Will increase active travel.

An assessment of the objections noted the following main category of concerns:

- Will not be enforced.
- Will increase pollution and congestion.
- Not required, speeds already low or too few collisions.
- Money should be spent on other measures such as fixing potholes.

On 31 January 2024 the five applications received delegated powers from Cllr Bryan, Portfolio Holder, Highways, Travel and Environment, and we are now working towards delivery dates beginning in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

- 5.4 Phase two applications relate to those submitted between 1 March 2023 and 31 December 2023, and any carried over from phase one. The panel of 31 January 2024 met to consider 18 applications and agreed that six met criteria and these will now move forward to public consultation which we aim to hold in the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

The six locations that met criteria were:

- Cheselbourne

- Child Okeford
- Milborne St Andrew – *The Causeway*
- Okeford Fitzpaine
- Winterborne Kingston
- Wimborne – *Allenview Rd / Burts Hill*

5.5 Community led applications have progressed at a pace that has been commensurate with the levels of operational demands and risks being managed by the highways service.

5.6 The phase one and two schemes together with future supported schemes will be an important addition to the thirty schemes that have previously been installed by DC.

5.7 The policy has been used to actively promote the installation of 20mph schemes, where appropriate, on future residential housing developments.

Many of the residential streets within housing developments have been designed in such a way to encourage speeds at or below 20mph in accordance with national design guidance document *Manual for Streets*, however, there is need for careful assessment given the potential for a two-tier speed limit if the road through the development used by buses remains 30mph. Having a mixed speed limit on a housing development could result in unwelcome signage denoting the different speeds with negligible change in behaviour.

Where practical, the extent of a 20mph scheme associated with a new development will include any adjoining residential areas to ensure consistency for the community.

Several new 20mph housing development schemes are progressing with Curtis Fields, Weymouth closest to delivery.

There has been interest from communities living in existing housing developments to retrospectively introduce a 20mph scheme and these will be considered through the community led application process in close liaison with the Highways Development Team.

5.8 The policy has been used to identify potential 20mph schemes as part of a highway improvement measure.

The increasing popularity of the School Streets initiative supported by the recent Active Travel England grant will enable the installation of 20mph where this would support the School Street.

Unconnected to School Streets we are progressing a 20mph scheme at a school in Weymouth where it is no longer necessary to have a School Crossing Patrol but new safety measures including a 20mph limit have been identified which will help to improve safety throughout the day.

- 5.9 During operational delivery it has become clear that many communities feel unsafe due to speeding, or they have a perception of speeding but are unsure as to whether they should apply for a 20mph limit or whether other measures may be more appropriate.

Options such as painted SLOW signs, the installation of a Speed Indicator Device (SID), the creation of a Community Speed Watch group or consideration of a more appropriate reduced speed limit (not 20mph) are all valid options that can be considered before moving towards a 20mph application.

These options have been further enhanced by the current DC *Please Slow Down Initiative* funded by the Police Crime Commissioner which is an ongoing trial of a new 'please slow down' sign to combat the risk of speeding within village communities. This pilot is operating within the North Dorset MP constituency boundary.

Due to this mix of safety options the Road Safety Team seeks to actively engage with communities to consider alternatives before progressing to a potential 20mph application. For example, a North Dorset village has recently pivoted towards a SID application and a Purbeck village is now seeking a 30mph limit where currently they have a National Speed Limit (60mph). Both communities had originally pursued a 20mph application.

It is pleasing to note that as intended the policy has led to an increase of interest in Community Speed Watch volunteering. These volunteers play a crucial part in road safety and last year they monitored the speeds of over half a million vehicles, with the police issuing warning letters to 12,600 motorists.

- 5.10 The key to implementing any successful scheme is for it to be delivered in collaboration with education, training, publicity, and enforcement for all road users.

We have developed a new *20mph Toolkit* for DC Members, Parish and Town Councils which provides tools, assets and information needed to conduct successful communication to encourage compliance once a new 20mph scheme has been implemented.

The Road Safety Team will be conducting post implementation speed surveys to establish if the new limits have reduced speeds, collision data reviews and will work closely with DC Members and Parish and Town Councils to understand the community's perception of the new limit.

## 6. **Enforcement strategy**

- 6.1 DC is the responsible highways authority for setting speed limits with Dorset Police (DP) being responsible for enforcement.
- 6.2 Every new 20mph scheme will have a supporting TRO and DP are always consulted during the making process.
- 6.3 The Dorset Road Safety Partnership (DRSP) which includes the Assistant Chief Constable and Police Crime Commissioner meet on a regular basis with DC. The partnership is actively developing a plan to enhance the level of speed camera enforcement for all speed limits in its drive to improve road safety and meet the aim for Vision Zero.

Last year the Assistant Chief Constable made the following statement:

*'Dorset Police would support a reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 20mph where a clear evidenced based approach has been taken, to demonstrate that the measure will initiate a reduction in speed and where possible to quantify and relevant, a related drop in collisions.'*

*It's important to note that Dorset Police will not be able to supply additional resource to monitor and enforce any proposed reduction in speed limits from 30mph to 20mph, and that operations to do so, would have to be built into existing operational capability.*

*As with any speed limit, Dorset Police would focus its monitoring and enforcement activity based on risk, and in line with National Police Chief Council guidelines. With 20mph limits, and specifically in line with those guidelines, Dorset Police would only enforce where there is a significant risk from continuous high speeds, i.e. a proportionate approach'.*



## 7. Policy matrix criteria

- 7.1 The policy requires amongst other criteria an assessment of injury collision history and relevant damage only/near miss collision reports.
- 7.2 The Road Traffic Act provides a definition of a reportable road traffic collision and DfT guidance 'STATS20 manual' provides a detailed explanation of the data which must be collected by the police when a collision is reported to them. This guidance requires police forces to report personal injury road traffic collisions to local highway authorities, however, there is no requirement for non-injury collisions reported to police to be reported to local authorities.
- 7.3 To mitigate the above gap in reporting DC has created a non-injury reporting system in addition to an option to report near misses, however, many communities are unfamiliar with this system, it is not well used, and the limited number of reports cannot be verified. Due to the lack of verification and out of fairness none of the applications have been assessed on the non-injury/near miss criterion.
- 7.4 Whilst recognising that there will remain an element of under reporting by the public the DRSP has identified that most collisions reported to DP are non-injury collisions and by not reporting these to DC or BCP this creates a gap in knowledge for all partners and a risk to the wider road safety arena. Work is underway to consider how best to capture non-injury collisions that are reported to DP and a separate work strand to understand hospital data so that partners have a much better understanding of the collisions that are occurring pan-Dorset.

## 8. Risks

- 8.1 UK Government has announced that because of the Welsh Government approach to 20mph and the expansion of TFL ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Zones) in London they intend to update the 20mph guidance (for England) as part of their '*The Plan for Drivers*' review.

DfT state that while 20mph schemes are an important tool in improving road safety in residential areas, over-use risks undermining public acceptance, and they are clear that 20mph should be considered on a road-by-road basis to ensure local consent, not as blanket measures.

The DC policy already considers applications on a case-by-case basis and does not have a blanket use of 20mph. It will be necessary to consider a review of the local policy once the new DfT guidance has been provided.

## 9. **Financial Implications**

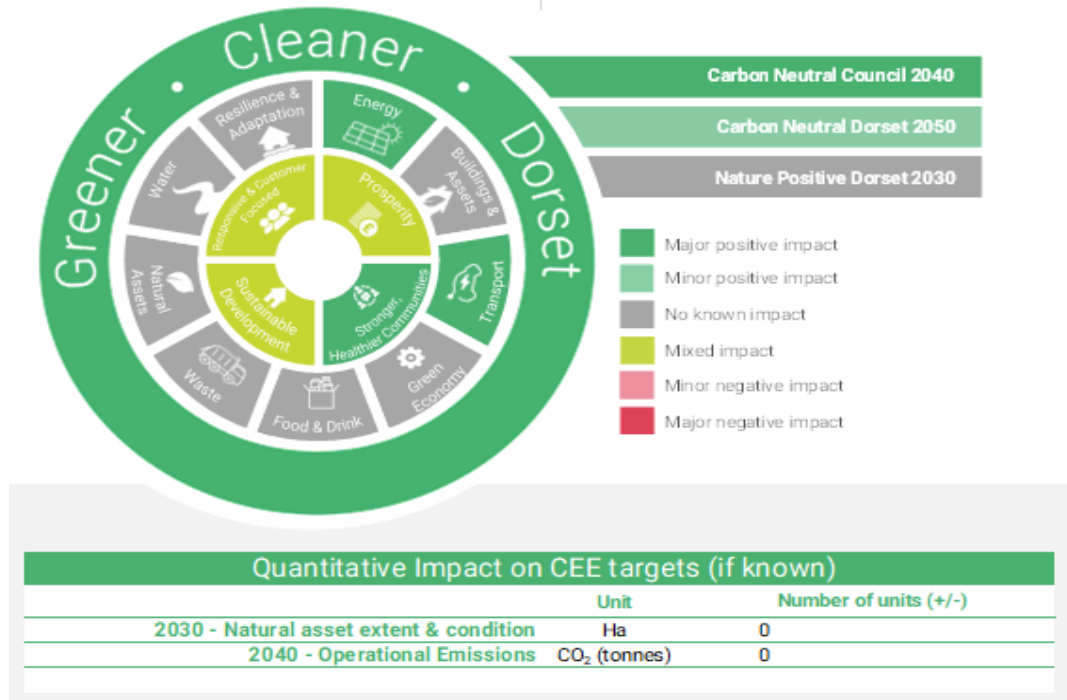
- 9.1 DC are promoting 20mph schemes within the capital programme where they reach sufficient priority. An initial £75,000 of capital funding has been allocated for 20mph limits for this FY.

Costs associated with the five Phase One applications including signs, labour, traffic management and TRO process will be approximately £25,000.

None of the planned schemes include any physical traffic calming measures (zones) which would have significantly increased costs.

- 9.2 Several Town Councils are considering whole town 20mph applications, and the costs associated with delivery of these schemes would be commensurate to the geographical ambition.
- 9.3 There remains an option for any large-scale schemes or more expensive 20mph zones to be considered for separate funding. They would be prioritised using the existing Local Transport Plan (LTP) prioritisation process.
- 9.4 Parish and Town Councils can self-fund lower priority schemes if they meet the essential criteria.
- 9.5 DC has received funding from Active Travel England for the delivery of School Streets. Part of these funds can be used to implement 20mph schemes associated with this work.
- 9.6 Costs associated with a new housing development 20mph scheme are met by the developer with no costs to DC, however, retrospective schemes on established housing developments are unlikely to be met by the developer.

10. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	Major positive impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	Major positive impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
<b>Corporate Plan Aims</b>	<b>Impact</b>

Prosperity	Neutral
Stronger healthier communities	<b>Strongly supports it</b>
Sustainable Development & Housing	Neutral
Responsive & Customer Focused	Neutral

- 10.1 The climate wheel assessment did not identify any recommendations.
- 10.2 DC has conducted a literature review of 20mph schemes and the impact on Air Quality (AQ). The results have been varied, with contestation regarding the significance of the impact in reducing emissions. This review is contained within the background papers.
- 10.3 None of the current 20mph schemes are in areas subject to routine AQ monitoring and therefore to gather data it would be necessary to obtain at least 12 months baseline data while the location remained at 30mph. This delay might be unacceptable to a local community that was successful in its application for 20mph. We are engaging with the Environmental Health Team to consider options.
- 11. Well-being and Health Implications**
- 11.1 The policy is aimed at maximising important benefits of 20mph schemes including quality of life and community benefits, and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling, wheeling and other mobility aids.
- 12. Equalities Impact Assessment**
- 12.1 The policy is directly aimed at having a positive impact on vulnerable road users including children and the elderly. This starts at the application stage when Members, Parish and Town Councils are required to consider these concerns, and they will then form part of the evidence base for an application. The potential benefits to vulnerable road users are considered throughout the process.
- 13. Appendices**
- 13.1 20mph toolkit.
- 13.2 Literature Summary Regarding 20mph Zones and Air Quality.

## 14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 20mph policy [20mph Limits and Zones - Dorset Council](#)
- 14.2 DfT: The plan for drivers [The plan for drivers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 14.3 North Dorset signs initiative [Release: Dorset PCC joins forces with Dorset Council to discourage speeding · Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner](#)
- 14.4 School Streets link [School Streets - Dorset Council](#)
- 14.5 Dorset Road Safety Partnership [Dorset Road Safe Partnership - Dorset Road Safe Partnership](#)
- 14.6 DfT STATS 20 Manual [STATS 20 - Instructions for the Completion of Road Accident Reports from non-CRASH Sources \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)