

***Enforcing and Announcing
Speed Limits
Scrutiny Review***

***Report of Conclusions and
Recommendations***



***Scrutiny Committee
October 2002***

1. Background to the Review

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Committee of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has undertaken a review of the announcement and enforcement of speed limits in the Borough. The review was scoped at a meeting of Committee in May 2002 and was discussed in detail at its meeting in August 2002. Final conclusions and recommendations were agreed at the September 2002 meeting.
- 1.2 Scoping of the review sought to highlight the following areas of concern:
- the extent to which national policies and regulations on speed signage may be a constraint on local responses to problems of traffic speed
 - the scope for seeking amendments to such regulations and what is being done at Government level to address speed issues
 - what scope exists for the introduction of more innovative approaches to speed signage and controls in the Borough
 - the current levels of speed enforcement being carried out by the Kent Police and their views on speeding issues generally in relation to other policing priorities
 - the identification of specific locations in the Borough where speeding was considered to be a particular concern, including urban areas, village centres, rural lanes and specific locations such as near to schools.
- 1.3 The review process included a site visit by Members to a number of locations in the Borough which had been identified as having potential problems of excessive traffic speed along with examples of traffic calming schemes and other speed control measures.
- 1.4 At the review meeting, evidence was presented from the following sources:
- background information on the national perspective including information from a study by the former DETR in 2000 'New Directions in Speed Management – a Review of Policy', and conclusions drawn from a Select Committee Review of Traffic Speed completed in June 2002;
 - the submission of reports and verbal evidence from the Director of Planning and Engineering, the Head of Transport Management of Kent County Council and Inspector Cave of the West Kent Police.

- the results of consultation with Borough Council Members on areas within the Borough where speeding was a concern.

1.5 Full details of the review are contained in the relevant Scrutiny Committee agenda papers. The purpose of this report is to set out the key issues, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the review process.

2. Review Conclusions

2.1 The review considered a wide range of issues relating to the issue of speed enforcement and speed signage. The conclusions and recommendations are presented in four sections dealing with:

- National Government issues
- Speed enforcement issues
- Matters for the Highways Partnership
- Matters for the Borough Council

(a) National Government Issues

2.2 The review received written evidence from the (former) DETR and the Select Committee on Traffic Speed which reported in June 2002. Many concerns arising from the Scrutiny Review were reflected in the Select Committee findings. In particular, the following Select Committee conclusions were specifically identified as ones which should be supported by the Borough Council:

- *The Government should publish as a priority revised Guidance to local authorities on setting local speed limits and principles for speed management. The Guidance should also offer information on the range of interventions available to local authorities to act as preventative measures in advance of crashes and injuries occurring. Local authorities should subsequently be guided by a national framework for determining appropriate vehicle speeds on roads and by a new hierarchy of roads defined by their function and quality in urban and rural areas*
- *Repeat signs should be permitted in 30 mph zones where the speed limit is not apparent from the design of the road or cannot be enforced by traffic calming. The 'derestricted' sign should be replaced by a sign indicating what the speed limit is.*
- *The Government should ensure that guidelines should not be in a form that discourages local authorities from taking appropriate decisions to reflect local circumstances*
- *The failure to take road safety in general and speed in particular seriously has important effects. We would have expected campaigns to be mounted to reduce so tragic and avoidable form of death and serious injury. There are many*

opportunities for all parts of the media to do this; unfortunately, some elements in the press do the reverse: they rail against the very measures designed to reduce speed and save lives. The evidence to this inquiry shows that there are serious concerns about the link between motor industry advertising and journalism. We are also concerned that the BBC has done so little to promote road safety in pursuance of its general public service obligation.

- *A few local authorities have taken very effective measures which have saved lives and led to major improvements in the quality of life. Others, however, have done much less. All should aim to reach the standards which the best have now achieved. Local authorities do face funding difficulties: there are too few revenue funds (which means that there are too few skilled staff) and too many obstacles to getting cost-effective schemes approved. Although it is insufficient for the programme outlined by the TRL in 1997, there is more capital available than before. The principal problem is that too few councils have made road safety and speed reduction a priority.*
- *Crashes which occur while drivers are working are very common, and deaths caused in this way are probably the largest single cause of work-related fatalities. The HSE would be negligent if it failed to extend its activities to this most important safety issue. The fact that it would cost money is not an excuse for ignoring it. If it does not do so, the Government must demand that it reconsiders the matter. It must provide the money to ensure that the HSE can employ the necessary staff. Clearer guidance to employers on managing road risk is urgently needed. We recommend that the Transport Committee investigates this in more detail.*

2.3 Given the national profile of the issue of speeding, it was agreed that the Cabinet be recommended to express support for the recommendations of the Select Committee as noted above and press Government to respond positively to them.

[note: In the event, Government has published its formal response to the Select Committee prior to the Borough Council being able to react to the recommendations. As a consequence, it was resolved that the Borough Council should instead submit further views on the Government's responses to the above issues and press for further Government action on these matters.]

2.4 It was also reported to the Review that revised Regulations on Traffic Signs including speed management was due to be published in the near future. The Review found that a key constraint on local initiative and flexibility in dealing with speed signage was over-prescriptive Government Regulations on the matter. In particular, there was concern that current Regulations prevented the use of repeater signs within 30mph areas with street lighting and that here, and in other areas, prior approvals were required to introduce other more innovative signage such as speed limit and warning roundels on the road surface.

- 2.5 It was also acknowledged that attitudes of responding to requests, and endorsing proposals, for new signage proposals could be more flexible, with decisions based more on common sense principles rather than being overly reliant on prescribed Regulations. There should be a willingness on the part of all involved in the process to consider and agree more innovative ideas and solutions to reflect and meet community concerns about traffic speeds.
- 2.6 On this basis, it was recommended that Cabinet should press the Department for Transport to issue its revised guidance as quickly as possible and specifically to include:
- provision for more local discretion in the design and implementation of speed control measures and the need for less prior approvals to be obtained for such measures
 - enabling the setting of new and revised speed limits to take full account of local quality of life issues as well as their enforceability
 - allowing for repeater signs and road surface roundels within 30mph zones with street lighting
 - applying 30mph limits in all villages and in the vicinity of local schools
 - applying progressively reducing speed limits (eg from 50mph to 40mph to 30mph) on the entrances to villages and other appropriate areas.
- 2.7 In addition, it was agreed that Cabinet inform local Members of Parliament of the above views and they be invited to support the Borough Council in pressing Government for action on the matters identified.

(b) Speed Enforcement Issues

- 2.8 The Review heard evidence that the enforcement activity of Kent Police against excessive speeding was intelligence-led and focused on specific campaigns for certain roads where there was evidence of casualty crashes. Any action undertaken was subject to police resources being available for such work. In addition, it was acknowledged that police resources for such enforcement activity was thinly spread across the County and that, when compared to other forms of crime and disorder, speeding was regarded as one of their lowest priorities for attention.
- 2.9 Other police authorities around the Country, eg Northampton, Nottingham and Suffolk, had placed much higher priority on speed enforcement and in these areas, significant improvements in speed reduction had been achieved.
- 2.10 Evidence was also submitted that in some individual cases, proposals for the introduction of physical measures on local roads to reduce speeding had been resisted by the Police on the grounds of insufficient enforcement resources being available. The emphasis on carrying out speed enforcement only at sites with poor

crash records was also questioned. Although it was acknowledged that current police resources were currently insufficient to carry out any more enforcement, it was felt that enforcement was needed not just where more serious crashes had already occurred but where, due to excessive traffic speed, there was the potential for crashes of all types to happen and where the local quality of life was being adversely effected. Speed enforcement should be more responsive to community concerns about speeding, including the dangers created for pedestrians and cyclists by excessive traffic speeds.

- 2.11 The proposals to enable all crash data (not just those causing casualties and fatalities) to be recorded by the Kent Police was welcomed as a positive step forward. It was hoped that appropriate systems could be developed to ensure consistency and accuracy and that such data could be shared with Kent County Council to improve information about local road safety.
- 2.12 It was agreed that additional police resources, dedicated to traffic duties and speed enforcement, is central to securing improvements and that the Cabinet should invite Government to identify additional specific funding for Police Authorities for this purpose.
- 2.13 Whilst available police resources was acknowledged as a constraint, there was concern that insufficient priority was being attached to speeding by relevant authorities. In this regard, it was agreed that the Cabinet should refer the findings of this review to the Chief Constable, the Kent Police Authority and the Kent Road Safety Forum and they be invited to place a significantly higher priority on speed enforcement than that which currently applies.
- 2.14 Publicity and education about the effects of speeding also needed to be improved. Members noted the successful step change in attitude achieved in recent years with drink driving and noted examples from other countries where excessive speeding was not an acceptable part of the culture. Whilst anti drink driving campaigns were still being operated (particularly around the Christmas period), anti-speeding campaigns with high profile checks and subsequent publicity about prosecutions could do much to raise greater awareness about speeding. Use of national and local media could also reinforce such messages.

(c) The Highways Partnership

- 2.15 The need to introduce physical speed control measures at the more local level was seen very much as a response to the lack of proper enforcement and the failure of education and publicity to change driver attitudes to speeding. However, due to resource constraints, Government regulations, and environmental considerations, such measures could not be used to solve each and every local problem and areas needed to be carefully prioritised.

- 2.16 Although resources for such measures have been limited, it was reported that potential changes to costs related to the use of safety cameras (which will now be recoverable from the Treasury) meant that more funding was likely to become available. In addition, funds were available for specific matters such as promoting safe routes to school subject to successful bids being made.
- 2.17 Members reported that Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) and interactive speed signs appeared to be very effective in reminding drivers to slow down at specific locations. For example, it was reported that the recently installed sign at Borough Green on the A25 was particularly effective in this regard. Whilst deployment of such signs around the Borough was underway, and the costs in some instances supported by Parish Councils, there was a need to accelerate their deployment given the positive effects on speeding that could be achieved. In addition, such signs offered the possibility of recording data about the number and speed of vehicles in the locations they are deployed and it was considered essential that such information was gathered, recorded and passed to the Kent Police to assist with their enforcement activity.
- 2.18 The review highlighted specific concerns about speeding on roads in the vicinity of local schools. In one instance, a road immediately outside a local secondary school was de-restricted and had no speed limit. It was acknowledged that the safer routes to school initiative has started to address some of the concerns about child safety near to schools. However, it was felt that rural village schools were of particular concern and a more comprehensive approach towards setting appropriate speed limits, signage, safe parking and verge maintenance was required.
- 2.19 It was agreed that the Borough and County Councils via the Highways Partnership should do more to raise the public profile about speeding and work together more on local speeding issues. As such it was recommended that the Cabinet invite the Joint Transportation Board to consider the conclusions and recommendations arising from the review and explore what Partnership action might be undertaken to:
- bid jointly for increased support funding from Government to support the implementation of further speed enforcement measures in the Borough
 - investigate best practice in signage from other counties and the scope for more local innovation
 - consider what scope might exist to seek the deployment of additional permanent speed cameras, speed indicator devices and interactive signs in the Borough in 2003/4
 - identify the need for specific measures to be undertaken to promote safer routes to school in the Borough with a particular focus on rural village schools, including the setting of appropriate speed limits, signage, parking provision and verge maintenance

- investigate what scope exists to mount a concerted publicity campaign within the Borough to promote safer driving speeds and greater driver awareness of speed limits and how such a campaign might link with national and county initiatives.

(d) Borough Council Issues

- 2.20 In addition to action at the National and County levels and via the Joint Transportation Board, the review highlighted the need to identify actions which could be drawn up and implemented over a shorter time scale to demonstrate a positive and immediate response to the concerns about speeding within local communities in the Borough. As part of the review, Members were asked to identify specific locations of concern about excessive traffic speeds and the resulting list is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.21 It was felt that a more simple, low cost initiative to identify additional roads where warning signs could be marked directly on road surfaces was worthy of further consideration. Members have been consulted on such an initiative following the review meeting and the list of identified areas is attached as Annex B. It will be a matter for the Cabinet to decide how this initiative could be taken forward and the resource implications involved.
- 2.22 The Borough's Crime Reduction Strategy currently does not place speeding and speed enforcement as a high priority for attention. Given the fact that speeding is potentially the most often committed and least detected crime in the Borough and is emerging as a major quality of life issue for many local residents, it was considered that there was a need for the Partnership to consider the results of this review and take its conclusions into account in framing future actions and initiatives.
- 2.23 In recognition of importance of driver education in speed management, the Council has recently purchased a mobile speed indicator device and has started to deploy this equipment in areas of particular concern. Given the number of locations identified in Annexes A and B by Members, there is a need to ensure that the mobile SID is deployed effectively to cover such locations, and if necessary, a second SID purchased to ensure that there is adequate cover in the Borough at those locations where permanent interactive signs and devices are not planned to be deployed.

3. Summary of Recommendations

1. The conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review were reported to the Council's Cabinet on 16th October 2002. Cabinet resolved to accept all of the recommendations from the review subject to a minor change in emphasis under (i) (a) to reflect the fact that Government has already made its formal response to the Select Committee. The following resolutions were therefore adopted:

- (i) send a copy of this report to the Secretary of State for Transport and he be asked to:
- (a) reconsider his response to the recommendations of the Select Committee on Road Traffic Speed and, in particular, those recommendations noted in para 2.2 above;
 - (b) bring forward revised Regulations on Speed Management taking into account the Review of Policy published in 2000 by the DETR and specifically:
 - provision for more local discretion in the design and implementation of speed control measures and the need for less prior approvals to be obtained for such measures
 - enabling the setting of new and revised speed limits to take full account of local quality of life issues as well as their enforceability
 - allowing for repeater signs and road surface roundels within 30mph zones with street lighting
 - applying 30mph limits in all villages and in the vicinity of local schools
 - applying progressively reducing speed limits (eg from 50mph to 40mph to 30mph) on the entrances to villages and other appropriate, sensitive areas.
- (ii) send a copy of this report to the Home Secretary drawing attention to the need for additional, dedicated police resources to be made available for traffic and speed enforcement duties.
- (iii) send copies of this report to local Members of Parliament inviting them to support its conclusions and recommendations and take up the issues identified with relevant Government departments.
- (iv) send copies of this report to the Chief Constable for Kent, the Chairman of the Kent Police Authority and the Chairman of the Kent Roads Safety Forum and invite them to:
- support the recommendations arising from this Review and in particular, the need to give traffic speed and its control significantly higher priority than has hitherto been the case;
 - use their best endeavours to ensure that resources will continue to be allocated to speeding enforcement including a need to focus on areas of local concern as noted by the Review, for example, within urban areas, village centres and outside schools;
 - explore the need for greater partnership working between agencies involved in speed management and enforcement and in particular to ensure that all parties at all levels adopt a flexible and innovative approach to such joint working;
 - consider the need to strengthen county-wide partnership initiatives and campaigns to educate drivers about the effects of excessive speed in order to

achieve the same step change in attitude that has been successfully achieved with drink driving.

- (v) That Cabinet refer the issue of speed signage and enforcement to the Joint Transportation Board for Tonbridge and Malling and they be invited to consider the conclusions of this review and explore what Partnership action might be undertaken to:
- bid jointly for increased support funding from Government to support the implementation of further speed enforcement measures in the Borough
 - investigate best practice in signage from other counties and the scope for more local innovation
 - consider what scope might exist to seek the deployment of additional permanent speed cameras, speed indicator devices and interactive signs in the Borough in 2003/4
 - identify the need for specific measures to be undertaken to promote safer routes to school in the Borough with a particular focus on rural village schools, to include the setting of appropriate speed limits, signage, parking provision and verge maintenance
 - investigate what scope exists to mount a concerted publicity campaign within the Borough to promote safer driving speeds and greater driver awareness of speed limits and how such a campaign might link with national and county initiatives.
2. That the Cabinet be invited to consider the following:
- the introduction of low cost improvements to road signs, road surface roundels and other painted warnings on roads within that permissible by current regulations at locations specifically identified by the Review (Appendix B) and to ensure that existing budgets for the current year are sufficient to enable the above measures to be introduced as quickly as possible
 - referring the matter of speed enforcement to the Crime Reduction Partnership for their further consideration.
 - seeking to ensure that the Council's mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) is deployed effectively taking into account those locations identified in the Review and to consider the purchase of further devices if necessary.
3. That a further report be made to Scrutiny Committee in approximately six months to set out progress made on the above recommendations.

APPENDIX A – RESULTS OF MEMBER CONSULTATION – AREAS OF LOCAL SPEEDING CONCERN

Road	Location/Nature of Concern
A228 Including Castle Way and at Mereworth (Airfield to A26 Junction)	Whole length- excessive speeding especially downhill particularly at night. Castle Way used for 'joy riding' at night.
Seven Mile Lane, Mereworth	Whole length, speeding at weekends and at night.
A26 North and South of Hadlow	Excessive speeds at village entrances. Recent poor crash record.
A26, Hadlow Road, Tonbridge	Speeding from junction of Cornwallis Avenue to 40mph limit
Barchester Way, Tonbridge	Speeding over 30mph by vehicles using road as rat run.
The Ridgeway, Tonbridge	Excessive speeds on whole length
Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge	Speeding from junction of Trench Rd to Bishops Oak Lane, and further north as far as Scarecrow Hill
B245, Hildenborough	Hilden Manor to Watts Cross, excessive speeds
East Peckham	Church Lane, Old Road and Pound Road, excessive speeds
Wateringbury	Tonbridge Road and Bow Road, excessive speeds

East Malling	New Road (London Road end), excessive speeds
East Malling	Wateringbury Road from Corio Farm to the Heath crossroads, excessive speeds
New Hythe Lane, Larkfield	North from M20 bridge, excessive speeds
Aylesford	Hall Road, The Avenue and 20mph areas in High Street and Rochester Road, excessive speeds
Walderslade	Lower Robin Hood Lane, excessive speeds
Burham/Eccles	Rochester Road, Court Road, Bull Lane and Pilgrims Way (rat running/speed).
Wouldham	Knowle Road, entrance to village
Snodland	Hollow Lane whole length
A20, Wrotham	From Venture Café to Wrotham
Addington	Speed of vehicles entering village from Trottiscliffe
A25 Borough Green/Platt	New 30mph zone ignored, particularly in between Esso Garage and Pelican Crossing at the Co-op.
A227, Borough Green	Speed of vehicles entering Borough Green from the north
A227, Ightham	Tonbridge Road and Bates Hill

APPENDIX B – RESULTS OF MEMBER CONSULTATION ON AREAS SUGGESTED FOR ROAD SURFACE WARNING SIGNS

(a) Non 30mph Areas - for Immediate Consideration

1. Upper Haysden Lane, Tonbridge (junction of Masefield Way to A21 Bridge)
2. Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge – Stavecrow Hill to York Parade
3. Hall Road, Aylesford
4. Rochester Road, Aylesford (north of village)
5. A227 Shipbourne (Stumble Hill, in the vicinity of the school)
6. Back Lane, Upper Green Road, Shipbourne
7. A227, Ightham from South Lodge to 30mph zone
8. Fen Pond Road, Ightham (Ightham Court to Fen Meadow)
9. Church Road, Offham
10. Long Mill Lane
11. Crouch Village (entrances)
12. Roughetts Road, Ryarsh
13. Park Road, Leybourne
14. Pilgrims Way (Bull Lane to Rochester Rd)
15. Stansted and Fairseat area
16. Ford Lane, Vigo Hill/Taylor's Lane, Addington Lane, Trottscliffe
17. Bull Lane, Eccles (north and south of village)
18. Fostington Way, Blue Bell Hill (between Fostington Roundabout and Tunbury Avenue)
19. Offham Road, West Malling (prior to 30mph zone)
20. Hale Street, Church Lane and Tonbridge Road, East Peckham

(b) 30mph Areas - for Future Consideration

1. Barden Road and Barden Park Road (High Street to Railway Bridge)
2. Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge (lower)
3. The Ridgeway, Tonbridge
4. High Street, Forstal Road, Rochester Road – 20mph areas
5. Ryarsh Road (Birling) and Birling Road (Ryarsh/Leybourne)
6. Hollow Lane, Snodland
7. Bates Hill, Ightham (at bends and narrow sections)
8. Bull Lane, Eccles (within village)
9. Rochester Road/Court Road, Burham
10. Barnes Street, Golden Green
11. Yardley Park Road, Tonbridge
12. London Road, Tonbridge
13. Dry Hill Park Road, Tonbridge