

Speed Management Strategy

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1. Introduction

Cheshire East Council as traffic authority is responsible for setting speed limits on our local roads. The Cheshire East road network needs to support a local transport system that promotes economic growth, is safe for all road users and improves the quality of life in our communities.

Cheshire East Council, working in conjunction with other agencies, has demonstrated an established and positive track record for reducing the number and severity of traffic collisions and related injuries across the county road network. In so doing Cheshire East have developed relationships, supporting and responding to communities concerned with road safety in their area. Feedback from road users with regards to speed limits is good; although some communities have expressed their concerns about the effect speeding traffic can have on their safety and quality of life. This is particularly the case from vulnerable road users including the elderly and school children.

Cheshire East Council recognises the importance of its highway infrastructure and how an effectively maintained and managed network contributes to the safety of its users. This Strategy has been developed to support the Council's outcomes and other community driven policies and strategies such as Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Health and Wellbeing Board and Road Safety Policies.

2. Road Safety

The Road Traffic Act (RTA) requires local authorities to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and integral to this is the Council's approach in the management of speed on its roads.



Excessive or *inappropriate* speed is a regular concern raised by members of the public.

- *Excessive* speed refers to speeds above the mandatory limit (speeding).
- Drivers travelling at *inappropriate* speeds are those that whilst within the speed limit are going too fast for conditions such as negotiating a sharp bend, during poor weather or where there are unprotected road users.

The relationship between speed and road casualties is complex, but there is evidence that:

- lower speeds result in fewer collisions and less severe injuries
- reducing a speed limit does not necessarily mean a reduction in collision frequency.

Developed in conjunction with Cheshire East's Road Safety policy and current Government guidance, this *Speed Management Strategy* provides the framework to support on-going delivery through a shared intelligence-led approach, involving various agencies and stakeholders in the provision of:

- **Setting local speed limits**
- **Education** (with Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service)
- **Speed enforcement** (with Cheshire Constabulary)
- **Speed management measures (physical & persuasive)**

In addition, this strategy will also uphold the Council's core values in putting residents first and providing the best service possible to the road user.



3. Vision

Key objectives in Cheshire East are to:

- reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions and casualties
- create a safer highway environment by reducing incidents of excessive and inappropriate speed
- create environments that are more sympathetic to vulnerable road users
- empower local communities to play a proactive role in reducing incidents of excessive and inappropriate speed
- enhance respect for speed limits and improve compliance
- support a local transport system that promotes economic growth.



4. Delivery

4.1 Setting Local Speed Limits

As well as being the legal limit, speed limits are a key source of information to road users, particularly as an indicator of the nature and risks to be expected. They should be evidence-led, self-explanatory and reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel and encourage self-compliance.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for setting guidance on how speed limits are set and provides us with a **Speed Limit Appraisal Tool** which is used to provide an intelligent led decision on appropriate speed limits along with their circular document 1/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits ⁽¹⁾.

Where a speed limit is set too low and is 'out of kilter' with a drivers' perception' of reasonable safe speed, compliance is likely to be poor. If unrealistic low speed limits are widespread, this leads to a lack of respect and poor compliance with speed limits in general.

Any changes to speed limits should be based on the following assessments:

1. What is the function of the highway corridor and the surrounding environment? Is the predominant function movement of vehicles or is it access and sense of place where quality of life and social interaction become more of a priority.
2. Casualty numbers. Is the collision rate and/or severity pattern higher than expected?
3. The need to promote walking and/or cycling and whether a lower speed limit would help encourage this.

4.2 Rural Principal and Distributer Routes (Routes of more than local importance)

These link the larger settlements and comprise of A and B roads and some C roads. The predominant function is movement of vehicles and drivers expect to travel at reasonable speeds. They are also important in supporting economic growth for the Borough.



On these routes the following criteria will be taken in to account where considering new speed limits:

Speed limit (mph)	Where limit should apply:
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended for most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.
50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50 mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.



Where these pass through settlements the access and quality of life for residents become more of priority.

Lower speed limits in settlement areas will be considered according to the following criteria:

Speed limit (mph)	Where limit should apply:
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement has shop(s), school(s), public house, petrol station etc. • Significant development on both sides of road, but not necessarily continuous, with some development in depth, overall frontage exceeds 400m in length • Some pedestrian/cycle activity throughout the day with possible peaks associated with schools etc. • Some provision for pedestrians/cyclists or acknowledged need and possible warning signs
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement has a clearly defined core –shopping area, town\illage green, etc. • Numerous facilities generating pedestrian/cycle activity - schools, shops, public house, play areas, etc. • Almost continuous frontage development exceeding 600m in length • Significant development in depth • Significant pedestrian activity throughout the day with provision of footways and or crossings

In order that travelling along these routes is more uniform and to avoid excessive changes in limits, the length of any speed limit will be a minimum of 600m with consideration given to buffer zones of a minimum of 400m where there would be a drop of 2 or more levels in limits, for example 60mph to 40mph.



4.3 Rural Minor Network

The vast majority of these roads are subject to *national speed limit*. On these roads the majority of drivers are travelling below the speed limit due to the environmental characteristics of the road.

A speed limit of 40 mph may be considered:

- where the function is predominantly local access or recreational for example in national parks
- where there is a high volume of vulnerable road users for example on a recognised recreational route.
- Where collisions higher than expected.

Such limits require repeater speed limit signs at regular intervals which can be aesthetically detrimental and a hindrance to maintenance of hedgerows.

Cheshire East will consider the installation of area wide 40mph zones that negate the need for normal signage in areas where mean speeds are already in line with such a limit. Such zonal areas will require approval by the Department for Transport.

4.4 Urban Areas

The standard speed limit in our urban and village areas is 30mph.

20mph speed limits and zones can be considered in areas of high concentrations of vulnerable road users where vehicle movement is not the primary function.

Research has shown^(2,3) that signed-only **20mph speed limits** generally lead to only small reductions (about 1mph on average) in traffic speeds and therefore such limits are most appropriate where mean vehicle speeds are already low.

Mandatory 20mph speed limits and zones will only be considered in those locations that are generally self-compliant due to the nature of the road layout or the presence of traffic calming features.

20mph limits can be introduced over an area where mean speeds at or below 24mph are already achieved over a number of roads. However, 20mph zones without physical measures will only be considered:



- where at least 90% of roads in the proposed zone have existing mean speeds of 25mph or below
- where 0-10% of roads in the proposed zone have existing mean speeds above 25mph, but below 27mph.

If existing speeds do not meet this criteria physical measures will be required.

When considering to implement a mandatory 20mph speed limit or zone, Cheshire East will consider the full range of options and their benefits, both road safety and wider community, and environmental benefits and costs.

From 2016 Cheshire East has committed to rolling out a programme of advisory part-time 20 mph speed limits outside its 160 schools.

5. Education

Cheshire East continues to facilitate road safety education to Primary Key Stage 2 (9-11 year olds) and Secondary Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) pupils within its schools across the Borough. This is provided by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service under agreement and provides nationally award winning education programmes to support better understanding of road safety and speed awareness.

Other education programmes include driver awareness days, "Think Drive Survive" course for young drivers, Advanced motorcycle training, Bikeability - cycle training for young people, Junior Road Safety Officers for Year 6.

6. Speed Enforcement

Enforcement of speed limits can only be carried out by the police. However, through strong partnership working, Cheshire East will assist in the targeting of locations that experience excessive or inappropriate speeding. The Cheshire Constabulary Speed Management Process is used for all speed related complaints that are received. This is an evidence led process and any engineering works identified will be fed through to the Council's minor works programme. Cheshire Police will undertake various speed awareness activities across the network along with active speed enforcement through the use of mobile speed camera vehicles.

7. Partnership Working

Cheshire East continues to be an active member of the Cheshire Road Safety Group. The aims of this Group is to reduce the number of people killed or injured on Cheshire roads by encouraging greater compliance of speed limits through the operation and maintenance of speed and red-light safety cameras.

A multi-agency approach to road safety and speed management will be co-ordinated by the Cheshire East Road Safety Executive Board. This Board will be made up of representatives from Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cheshire Constabulary and will produce a formal multi-agency road safety plan each year. This will include Education, Training & Publicity, Enforcement and Engineering and will be monitored and reviewed quarterly.

8. Speed Management Measures

The management of speed on the highways falls generally into two types of measure. They are:

Persuasion measures – seek to influence driver perception indirectly to bring about a reduction in speed.

Physical measures – directly influence driver behaviour to bring about a reduction in speed.

In Cheshire East the full range of speed management measures will be considered within the design of the highway implemented improvements. Such tools may include:



- Guidance and advice to Parish and Town Councils in setting up local initiatives – reducing local concerns related to traffic speed
- Improved signage at speed limit changes
- Community involvement – temporary and permanent Parish Speed Indicator Devices, community speed watch
- 20mph zones – with repeater speed sign, speed roundel road marking, traffic calming

- Gateways at village boundaries – help reinforce perception of different environment
- Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicating Devices (SIDs)
- Increase size of sign or use yellow rectangular backing boards
- Priority working/chicanes
- Colour surfacing/lining.



Specifically in Cheshire East:

- Following our Road Safety consultation with residents Borough wide, 47 **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)** were installed during 2015 at sites where it was considered that they would have a positive impact on speeding. These temporary devices will be monitored, reviewed and when appropriate redistributed to other areas that meet the following policy;

SIDs will be considered for locations where there is a proven personal injury collision record over the most recent 5 year period, or a history of inappropriate speed. An inappropriate speed is identified where the recorded 85th percentile speeds are in excess of the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) level for enforcement. (10% + 3mph higher than the posted speed limit) This is the nationally accepted method for speed measurement and takes account of inaccuracies in equipment and vehicle speedometers.

Speeds are recorded by an approved method over a 7 day period between the hours of 7am and 7pm, in order to obtain an accurate picture of the situation. If the criterion is met, a site visit is carried out to assess whether there is a safe and suitable location to site the SID, once one becomes available.

The SID is intended as a temporary measure and will be relocated at a future date. This is to ensure regular users of the road in question do not become over familiar with its presence and its effectiveness therefore becomes diminished. Research has shown that the effect of SIDs on vehicle speeds reduces as the “novelty” effect wears off (Poulter and McKenna, 2005).

- From early 2016 Cheshire East will implement an **advisory 20mph speed limit programme** outside its schools during peak times. During a 3 year programme the signs will be installed in the vicinity of 160 schools and will operate during peak travel times around schools.



9. References

- 1 Norfolk County Council, *Norfolk Speed Management Strategy 2014*
- 2 Hertfordshire County Council, *Speed Management Strategy 2014*
- 3 Department for Transport Circular, *Setting Local Speed Limits*, January 2013
- 4 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), *20mph Zones and Speed Limits*, June 2015
- 5 Public Health Summary of Evidence – 20pmh Zones .
https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Images/20mph_speed_limit_Public_health_report_CJ_SL_tcm21-196724.pdf#