



SPEED MANAGEMENT

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

23rd June 2010

KEY ISSUE

This report proposes rules for the deployment of Vehicle Activated Signs by Parish Councils in Guildford.

SUMMARY

The report sets out the risks involved in deployment of such signs, and proposes a set of rules which are designed to ensure the effectiveness of signs deployed, together with the safety of staff and the travelling public.

REPORT BY

SURREY ATLAS REF.

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

N/A

GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)

ALL

ALL

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the willingness of Parish Councils to contribute resources to the management of speed be welcomed, and
- (ii) that for the reasons set out in the report, the rules in paragraphs 3 to 14 be approved as the Committee's policy for the deployment of Vehicle Activated Signs by Parish Councils in Guildford.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Speed management is a controversial issue, and many requests are received by Members, officers and local committees for lower speed limits and more effective enforcement of existing limits.
- 2 At present, the range of options available to deal with excessive speed includes the following:
 - Enforcement by safety cameras, undertaken by the Safety Camera Partnership.
 - Enforcement action by Surrey Police, using laser equipment.
 - Speed data collection by Surrey Police using static equipment over a period of time.
 - Use of 'speed visor' signs or equivalent by Surrey Police. These display the speeds of passing vehicles whose speeds exceed a preset threshold. Some of these signs also collect speed data.
 - Community Speed Watch (CSW), where local volunteers record vehicle speeds and report those exceeding agreed thresholds to Surrey Police for further action.
 - School Speed Watch – similar to CSW but undertaken by schoolchildren with a Police Officer present.
 - Use of Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs) which are set to flash at or above a threshold speed. A variety of messages are available, such as 'slow down' or the use of appropriate warning symbols.
 - Amendment of speed limits, including alteration of traffic orders and associated signing and road markings.
 - Traffic calming, including village gateways, chicanes, speed cushions, humps and tables. These are often the most effective, but also the most expensive, and frequently lead to complaints regarding noise, vibration, inconvenience and discomfort.
- 3 The current popularity of VASs has led to some Parish Councils expressing the wish to purchase and deploy signs of their own. This additional resource dedicated to speed management is welcome, but there is a range of risks involved, and a set of rules is proposed to deal with these, as set out in the following paragraphs.

Effectiveness of Signage

- 4 There is evidence that when too many VASs are deployed, that their effect is weakened as drivers become accustomed to them, and as a result the effectiveness of all signs, including those already deployed at accident black spots, is reduced. For this reason a limit of two signs per Parish is recommended.
- 5 In order to avoid drivers becoming accustomed to the signs, they should be moved around from site to site, with a maximum of six weeks in any one location.

Safety of Staff and the travelling public

- 6 The safety of those who will erect the signs is an importance consideration. For this reason, the signs should not be erected on roads whose speed limits exceed 30 mph, and the staff concerned should have had appropriate training delivered by a company agreed by Surrey Police and Surrey Highways. This training should include appropriate traffic management, manual handling skills and training in the safe use of ladders and other equipment.
- 7 The Parish Council must provide evidence of appropriate insurance cover, covering both the staff concerned and public liability.
- 8 Surrey Police will draw up Rules of Conduct which must be obeyed by Parish Council staff or volunteers, failing which their approval to carry out these tasks will be withdrawn.
- 9 The Parish Council are to supply & use equipment including VASs, but also other items such as ladders and reflective clothing from a generic list approved by Surrey Police and/or Surrey Highways.

Choice of sites

- 10 The road concerned should have some residential properties, and there should be agreement between the Parish Council, Surrey Police, Surrey Highways and local residents or pedestrians that there is a problem of speeding at sites being considered and that the use of VASs is an appropriate response.
- 11 The Casualty Reduction Officer must be satisfied that the road layout is suitable for the erection of VASs, and the specific location for a VAS should be approved in writing by both Surrey Police and Surrey Highways.
- 12 Lighting columns or other suitable poles should be available on which the signs can be mounted. Failing this, the Parish Council must pay the cost of supply and installation of suitable poles. It should also be noted that all Surrey street lighting columns are in the effective ownership of Skanska, SCC's street lighting PFI contractor, and permission must also be sought from them before any equipment is mounted on these columns.

- 13 VASs will not be permitted in locations where they would affect sight lines, distract drivers at potentially hazardous locations, or be hazardous for staff erecting the signs.

Finances

- 14 The costs of the equipment, training and time of Parish Council staff and volunteers will be met in full by the Parish Councils concerned. No costs will be accrued to Surrey Police or Surrey Highways, other than the reasonable costs of their own staff time in supporting this initiative.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 15 This report has no direct financial implications for Surrey Highways.

CONSULTATIONS

- 16 No consultations have been carried out on this new initiative.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 17 This report has no implications for equality and diversity.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 18 This report is concerned with the reduction of vehicle speeds and associated anti-social driving behaviour. If successful, the proposal may have positive implications for the reduction of crime and disorder.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 19 The willingness of Parish Councils to participate in the management of speed is welcomed, and the proposed rules are designed to maximise the effectiveness of the proposal while minimising the risks.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 20 Subject to the Committee's approval, officers will write to all Parish Councils in Guildford informing them of the policy and inviting them to participate if they wish to do so.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None
