

Proposed trial of 20mph speed limits outside Primary schools within 30mph Limits without self enforcing traffic calming measures.

A report by the Head of Highway Transportation

Summary

1. Proposed trial of 20mph speed limits outside Primary schools within 30mph Limits without self enforcing traffic calming measures. These being, a TRO backed 20mph limit; an advisory 20mph limit; vehicle activated signs within the current speed limit . In addition a public engagement campaign within a wider catchment

Background

2. This proposal is the outcome from recent and previous requests to review the County Council's Policy for implementing 20mph limits outside schools. This is documented in the Highway Advisory Board committee reports dated 14 November 2006 and 12 July 2008. (the board no longer is formed). At which time it was agreed that the Council would retain its existing policy of implementing 20mph limits or zones at locations where there is a clear and justifiable need for the scheme. This decision was based on three key issues that the crash savings would be minimal and unlikely to significantly contribute to any new crash reduction target, the cost is prohibitive and the speed limits would be unenforceable. This request has again been raised following a petition submitted to Maidstone Joint transportation Board. During discussions between Kent Police and Kent County Council Services the Police explained that they have very limited resources to proactively enforce traffic offences in Kent hence the requirement for new limits to be self enforcing
3. There was however still a strong desire to look at installing 20mph limits outside schools without the need for traffic calming. It was therefore proposed that a trial could be conducted, at specific locations in the Maidstone area and as agreed with Kent Police, to ascertain the impact of installing 20mph limits without the need for traffic calming

A Proposed Trial of 20mph Limits without Physical Traffic Calming Measures

4. The proposed trial would be limited to primary schools within 30mph speed limits. The following trial methods and locations have been agreed with Kent Police :-
 - Experimental (up to 18 months) TRO 20 mph at B2163 Leeds and Broomfield primary school (from George PH to just north of bend by the churchyard)
 - Advisory 20mph during school hours (using static signs and flashing lights) combined with a campaign to publicise this at Ham Lane Lenham (Malt house Lane to Cherry Close)
 - Advisory 20mph limit at school times using interactive VAS signs-Queens Road St Francis school
 - Minor signs and lines enhancements funded by KHS within current speed limit at, Hunton primary school, West lane
 - Vehicle activated signs with school warning and school plate (Diag. 545 and 546 plate) within existing 30mph limit at Postley Road Southborough

- Do- nothing although include in pre and post evaluation) at Allington School, Hildenborough Crescent).
5. The 20mph limit is an experimental Traffic Regulation Order which would operate for a minimum of a six month assessment period and would need to be either removed or made permanent after a maximum of 18 months in operation. This and the other trial methods are intended to be implemented by the early part of 2012 and evaluated over the subsequent 8 to 12month period. By no later than the Spring of 2013 the success of the trial, based on whether it had been successful in terms of reducing traffic speeds; improving road safety; and not being a burden on police enforcement resources, will be determined. The decision to make permanent or remove the trial methods would then need to be made by the Highway Authority in consultation with Kent Police. The success criteria would be :
 - Change perception of perceived road safety danger to children on roads adjacent to schools as perceived by various groups to include Members, general road users, residents, and school users
 - Change perception of perceived traffic speeds adjacent to schools as perceived by various groups to include Members, general road users, residents, and school users
 - Influence a modal shift of journeys to schools
 - A manageable impact on traffic speed and Police enforcement requirements
 - Increase in motorists' awareness to travel at appropriate speed outside schools
 6. The cost of the trial schemes would need to be funded via the Member Highway Fund. The cost per site is not expected to exceed £15,000. The assessment and evaluation costs would however be met by KHS. Should the trial prove to be unsuccessful the removal costs of the measures would also be met by KHS.
 7. A public engagement campaign focused on a separate catchment area from the trial described above is also proposed during the early part of 2012. This would target motorists, encouraging a change driving behaviour where a school sign is observed. The location and detail is however to be confirmed and is subject securing funding.
 8. It should also be noted that an urban speed road safety campaign is to be run in September 2011. This is to target drivers educating them about the dangers associated with driving at excessive or inappropriate speed, albeit within the signed speed limit, with a particular focus on 30mph areas. Promoting the need for drivers to make a conscious choice to drive at an appropriate speed for the prevailing conditions in order to minimise the vulnerability, and fears of other road users. This may have a secondary influence on road user behaviour outside schools.

Recommendation

9. Members are asked to support and endorse a proposed trail of 20mph speeds limits outside Primary Schools in Maidstone on the basis contained within this report.

Accountable Officer: Andy Corcoran 01233 648302