REPORT TO: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 17 MARCH 2020**

SUBJECT: **IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNITY PURCHASED VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS**

BY: **DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the implications on Council resources required to facilitate the purchase, erection and maintenance of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) on behalf of communities.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (17) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management of traffic.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Committee is asked to:

i) note the resource and cost implications of enabling the purchase and installation of Vehicle Activated Signs by recognised community groups; and

ii) approve the proposed processes shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5 for the handling of community concerns in relation to the speed or perceived speed of traffic in built up areas.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Transportation Service and Police Scotland regularly receive enquiries and complaints relating to vehicle speeds and perceived speeding issues within built up areas and rural communities. More recently there have been a number of requests from communities for the permanent erection of Speed Indicating Devices (SIDs) at locations where traffic speeds are perceived to be higher than the speed limit.

3.2 A report was brought to this committee on 21 January 2020 setting out the best practice with regard to the use of SIDs and seeking the endorsement and

promotion of the current programme of SIDs deployment in response to community requests (para 5 of the draft minute refers).

3.3 The committee agreed in principle that where a community is seeking the installation of permanent digital signage to reinforce a speed limit where there are no recorded issues with speeding traffic, these that vehicle activated signs (VAS) may be funded by the community (including the costs of installation and ongoing maintenance) but installed by the Council as Roads Authority, in safe and suitable locations.

3.4 A further report was requested to detail how the provision of such signage could be achieved and to provide an indication of the likely resource implications on the Council.



Fig1 – Vehicle Activated Speed Warning Sign (VAS)



Fig2 – Speed Indicator Device (SIDs0

4. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FROM COMMUNITIES

4.1 In order to gauge the likely level of interest from communities with regard to the purchase of permanent speed limit reinforcing signage for a settlement or rural community subject to a 30mph speed limit, an email was sent to all Community Councils inviting expressions of interest.

4.2 Responses were received from eight community councils, of which three expressed interest in purchasing signage, three indicated that they would be discussing purchase at their next meeting and two stated that they had no interest and the cost of the signage was prohibitive.

4.3 The initial level of interest in the purchase of the signage has therefore been very limited, with the cost of the signage likely to be a determining factor for many communities.

4.4 At this stage the workload of the likely uptake could be absorbed within existing staffing resources. There have also been no factors that indicate any concerns or implications that have not already been considered by this Committee.

4.5 We have discussed this proposal and highlighted that the cooperative approach to SIDS deployment currently in place will continue.

5. PROCESS AND RESOURCING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

5.1 The following process is proposed when communities raise concerns about speeding within built up areas, subject to a speed limit. This process takes

cognisance of the best practice set out in the previous report to committee and provides communities with information on the various options available.

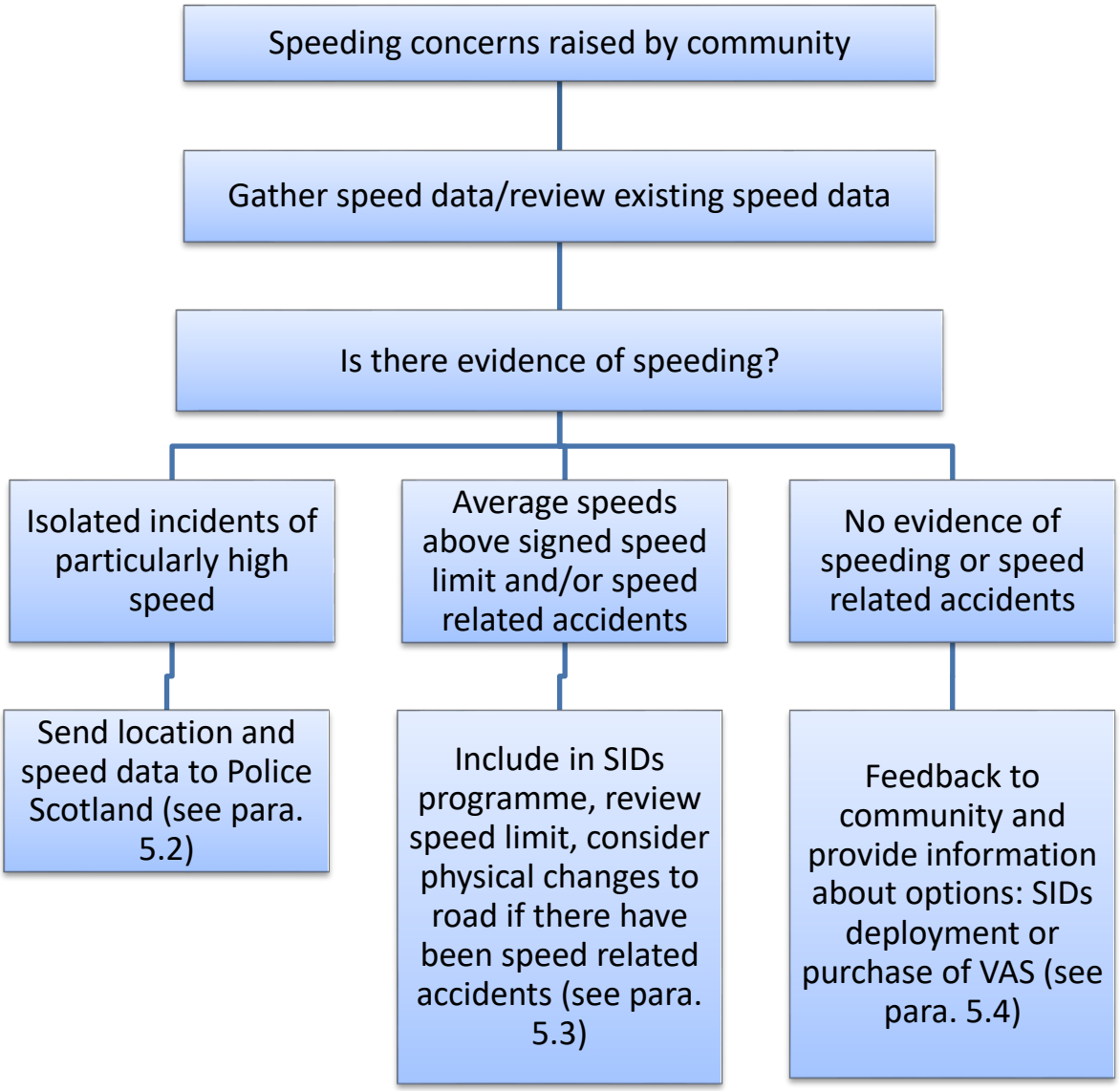


Figure 3 Proposed Process for the Handling of Concerns about Speeding Traffic raised by Community Groups.

5.2 The majority of communities are likely to be best served by the sharing of speed data with Police Scotland which can, if appropriate, be used to target any police speed checks to the times when there is evidence of vehicles travelling at speeds above the posted speed limit.

5.3 If there is an identified issue with speeding traffic and speed related accidents, then the council will investigate and consider appropriate measures, e.g. additional signage (VAS), a review of the speed limit or changes to the road alignment.

5.4 If there is no evidence of speeding or speed related accidents, and the community has expressed an interest in exploring the purchase VAS, then the following process is proposed:

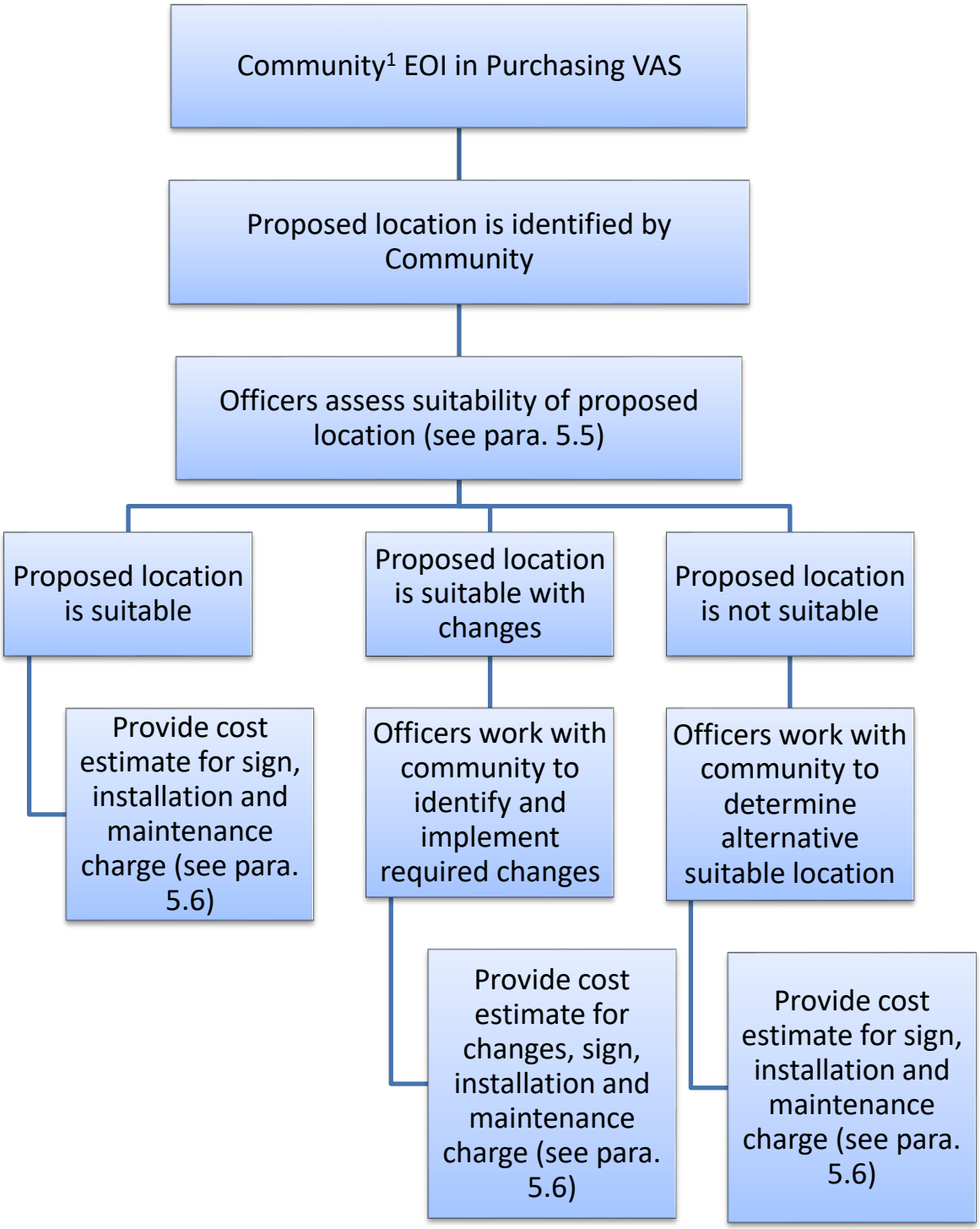


Figure 4 Process for Community to Instigate Investigation of Purchase of VAS

[1] Community recognised group such as Community Council, Residents Association or Area Forum

Site Suitability

5.5 When community groups are considering purchasing VAS they will usually have a location in mind for the signage. However not all locations are suitable. The criteria for locating VAS includes ensuring that the sign is sited in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Traffic Signs Manual and at the most

effective location e.g. away from overhanging branches and other obstructions. The distance that the sign is set back from the edge of the public carriageway is also a key criterion at locations where there is no footway present.

5.6 Officers would meet with the representatives of the community group on site to discuss the locations identified and provide advice on their suitability. If locations were not suitable, officers would work with the community group to identify appropriate locations, including suggesting an alternative location on the same stretch of road. Where an appropriate location could not be identified, e.g. locations where there was insufficient road verge width, the community groups would be advised of anything they could do to overcome the constraint e.g. purchase land to site the sign.

5.7 If, in the unlikely event that a location cannot be agreed upon, then the position would remain that no sign would be erected.

Cost Estimates

5.8 Upon agreeing a location, officers would further investigate the availability of power supplies for the signage and provide a cost estimate for works and materials required to erect the sign and an estimate for the current cost of the signage from suppliers.

5.9 The cost of the signs and equipment is approximately £3,500. An initial cost estimate for installing the VAS can range depending on whether existing street furniture can be utilised. The signs can be solar powered which would remove any costs associated with providing a power supply. If new street furniture is required, for a solar powered VAS the likely installation cost would be around £400. Signs requiring a wired connection are likely to cost more than this.

5.10 If the Community group decides to purchase VAS, then the following proposed process would apply:

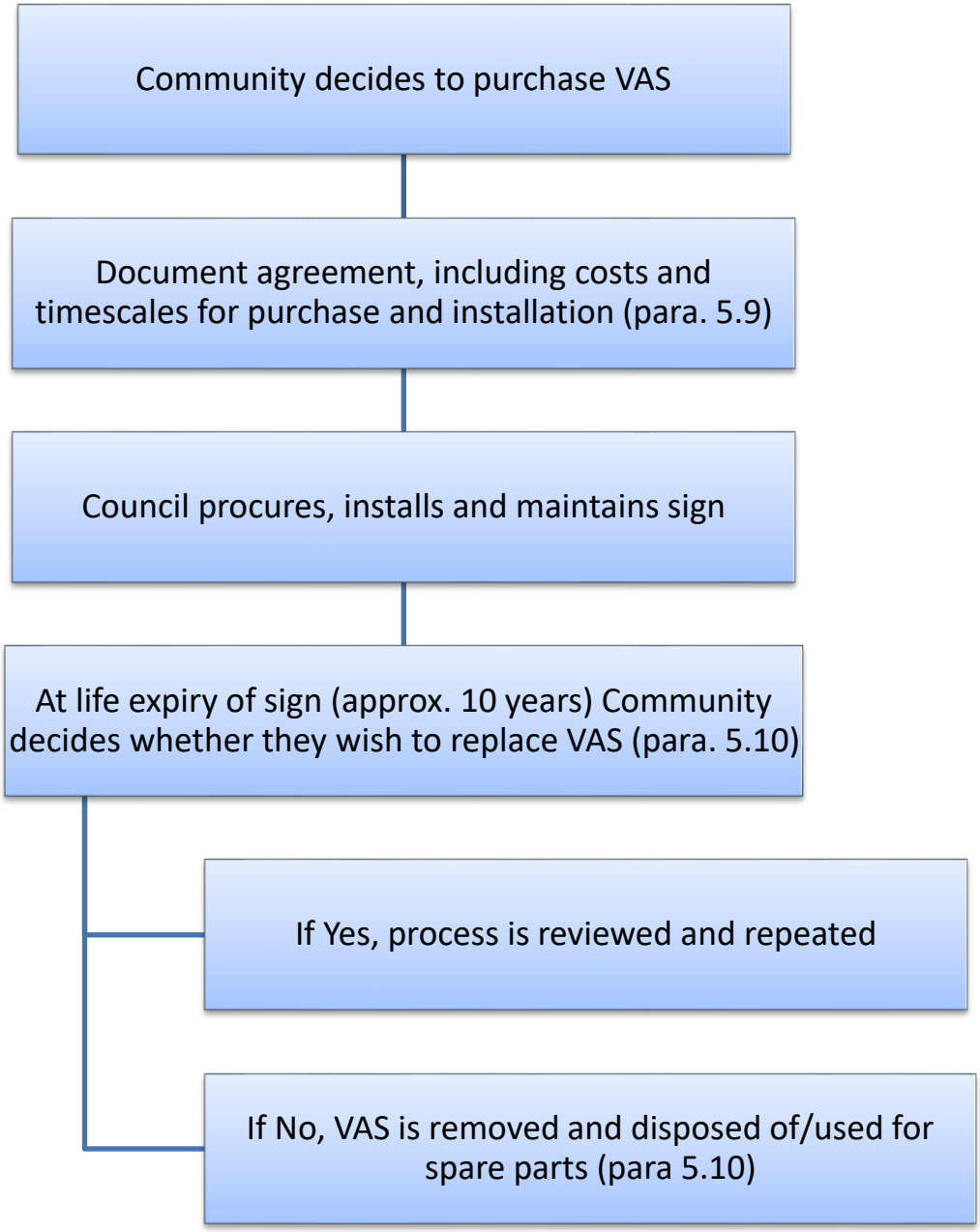


Figure 5 Proposed Process after Community Group agrees to Cost Estimate

Form of Agreement and Maintenance Costs

5.11 Upon receiving an estimate for these costs community groups would then decide whether they wished to proceed and enter into an agreement for the purchase and installation of the signs, along with covering the costs of the future maintenance of the signs.

5.12 There is a requirement to inspect and calibrate such signs annually. The annual cost of providing an inspection and calibration of a community purchased VAS would be £75 per sign. This can be billed annually, or as a single 10-year contribution at the time of purchase (10 years being the average asset life of a VAS).

5.13 Other maintenance costs would be invoiced to the community group on an 'as-incurred' basis at straight cost recovery (parts and time). This would be agreed in advance on an estimated basis.

5.14 If the community group did not wish to pay to repair the VAS it would be removed and stored for use by the Council as spare parts. If the community group failed to pay for a repair that had been agreed in principle then the asset would be removed and taken into Council ownership.

Cost Implications for Council

5.15 The likely cost implications for officer time responding to the initial request and providing a cost estimate to the community group would be £658.15. Should the community group wish to proceed with purchasing the sign(s) then the additional cost to the Council would be £438.77. This would be resourced from existing officer time.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This approach supports Moray 2023 Corporate Plan and the Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Strategy by promoting Safer Communities "Our communities will be safer places in which to live, work and travel" by identifying how the Council will positively engage with communities in response to concerns raised about traffic speeds.

(b) Policy and Legal

Enforcement of traffic speeds is undertaken by Police Scotland. Data collected is regularly shared with Police Scotland to assist them in any speed enforcement activities.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications of the Council purchasing, erecting and maintaining VAS on behalf of communities is set out in paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no specific risks associated with this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

The staffing implications are set out above

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
None

(h) Consultations
The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment & Finance), Principal Accountant (P Connor) Legal Services Manager, Committee Services Officer (L Rowan) and Police Scotland - Local Area Commander Moray have all been consulted and their comments incorporated into this report

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 A process for communities to fund the purchase and maintenance of Vehicle Activated Speed signs has been set out for approval.

7.2 It should be reiterated that any such purchase is entirely separate to the continued engagement of the Council with communities in relation to general road safety matters, and particularly where there is evidence of speeding by vehicles in a community.

Author of Report:	Diane Anderson, Senior Engineer Transportation
Background Papers:	Speed Indicator Devices Community Partnership Policy Report 21 January 2020
Ref:	