



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 21 JANUARY 2020**

**SUBJECT: SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
POLICY**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to seek endorsement of a collaborative approach to managing vehicle speeds and the perception of speeding traffic in communities through the use of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs).
- 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 best practice with regard to the criteria for the use of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs); and**
- ii) **endorse the continuation and promotion of the current programme of SIDs deployment in response to community requests for permanently sited and community operated SIDs.**

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 This report seeks to address these requests by setting out the best practice for the use of SIDs and provides details of the recent changes in the deployment of the council operated SIDs, which is seeking to work more

closely with communities and Police Scotland through the introduction of a targeted deployment programme.

4. TYPES OF VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS (VAS) AND THEIR RESPECTIVE USE

- 4.1 There are two types of traffic signs which light up as vehicles approach them, Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Both are used to address speeding, or inappropriate traffic speeds on the approach to isolated road features, where there is evidence to support their use.
- 4.2 A VAS is a permanent sign used to address the problem of inappropriate speed where conventional signage has not been effective. They are installed to supplement existing signage, not to replace it. The conditions under which VAS can be used is set out in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/03 Vehicle Activated Signs. This document has been uploaded alongside the agenda to Committee Management Information System (CMIS) for information.
- 4.3 Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/03 states that VAS should only be considered where:
- There is a collision problem at the site; and
 - The collisions are associated with inappropriate speeds.
- 4.4 There are two categories of VAS :-
- Speed enforcing signs that illuminate a speed limit roundel (e.g. '30') and may include an accompanying warning (typically 'SLOW DOWN'); and
 - Signs that give warning of a particular hazard, e.g. 'sharp bend', 'road narrows' etc., which by their nature highlight an issue that engineers have already deemed to be a risk either through accident records or engineering judgement.
- 4.5 SIDs are temporary signs which display the actual speed of an approaching vehicle. Sometimes the number displayed is accompanied by a smiling face for speeds under the speed limit or a frowning face for speeds which exceed the limit. The signs are installed for a limited period of time, generally to support a specific area based road safety campaign, or in response to community concerns related to traffic speeds.
- 4.6 There are two types of SIDs, those which are fixed to street furniture (normally a street lighting column) and mobile SIDs which are supported on a tripod. The sighting of temporary SIDs must take into account the safety of road users e.g. if located above a footway the bottom of the sign must be at least 2.1 metres above the level of the footway.
- 4.7 It should be noted that despite public perception, SIDs are not always effective in reducing vehicle speeds and in some locations can have the opposite effect of causing some vehicles to speed up (e.g. drivers who want to see how high the number will go).

5. BEST PRACTICE IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF SIDS

- 5.1 SIDs can be effective when erected on a temporary basis which avoids drivers becoming complacent after the sign has been in place for some time and developing 'sign blindness'. National studies on the use of VAS and SIDs, such as TRL Report PPR 314 which looked into the effectiveness of SIDs in London, have confirmed that there tends to be an immediate effect in terms of a reduction in traffic speeds at sites where SIDs are installed but that this effect reduces over time. This document has been uploaded alongside the agenda to the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) for information.
- 5.2 In 2014 Angus Council reviewed traffic surveys undertaken before and after SIDs were installed on a temporary basis and found that the initial installation of the signs resulted in a marked reduction in traffic speeds. However later when signs were installed again at the same site results showed less of a reduction in speed over the passage of time. Officers at Angus Council concluded that the results of the surveys seemed to confirm the notion of complacency and 'sign blindness' as drivers were aware of the signs and their purpose and therefore tended to pay less attention to them.
- 5.3 In Wales the Trunk Road Authority has developed specific guidance on the use of VAS, including SIDs. This guidance set out a clear assessment criteria and path for the consideration of VAS or SIDs at locations where there is an observed or perceived issue of speeding traffic. Of particular interest is their approach to complaints of speeding received from the community, which is presented in the flowchart attached as **APPENDIX 1**.
- 5.4 The Welsh Government criteria to be met for implementing SIDs is:
- A record of complaints regarding speeding received by either the Roads Authority or the Police; and
 - 85th percentile speeds recorded at more than 10% over the speed limit (e.g. 15% of traffic is travelling at speeds of 33 mph or above in a 30 mph speed limit).
- 5.5 There is no similar guidance on the use of VAS/SIDs issued by Transport Scotland. However many local authorities use the above approach and criteria.
- 5.6 In England there has been a growing move towards community funded VAS and community funded and operated SIDs. The Local Authority retains the decision making process as to whether or not VAS/SIDs are suitable to address the community concerns. In the case of community operated SIDs there is a requirement for training on the erection and operation of the signs, insurance and for community groups to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 5.7 In Scotland the general approach to enabling communities to participate in addressing speeding concerns has been through the Community Speed Watch initiative. This is a national initiative where active members of local communities join with support of the Police to monitor speeds of vehicles

using speed detection devices. Vehicles exceeding the speed limit are referred to the Police with the aim of educating drivers to reduce their speeds.

6. COUNCIL VAS AND SIDS

- 6.1 The council currently has nineteen VAS signs which are permanently installed at locations around Moray to reinforce the posted speed limit or make drivers aware of hazards. Eleven of these signs are speed roundel signs. Where these signs were installed to remind drivers of the posted speed limit it has been on the basis of evidence of traffic speeds above the limit, in keeping with best practice, e.g. on Morrision Road in Elgin, Findhorn Road in Kinloss.
- 6.2 The Council also has four SIDs which are installed on an ad hoc basis in response to concerns raised by communities. The SIDs are the type which are temporarily fixed to street furniture, generally a street lighting column. The Council does not have any of the mobile type of SIDs which are supported by a tripod.
- 6.3 There is one Speed Indicator Device which was paid for by a developer permanently sited in Archiestown. The sign was installed during the construction period of a nearby development and retained afterwards at the request of the community, against the advice from officers. The permanent installation of this device in Archiestown should therefore not be used as a precedent to erect other permanently sited SIDs.

7. SIDS DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

- 7.1 Since October 2019, in response to community concerns about speeding traffic, and in discussion with Police Scotland, a programme for the deployment of the council's SIDs has been developed.
- 7.2 The first deployment of signs has been in the west of Moray in Rafford, Forres and Findhorn, where the local community councils have recently raised concerns. In the New Year, the signs will be deployed in the Speyside area at sites in Craigellachie and Dufftown, again in response to requests from the community.
- 7.3 The current programme for sign deployment runs until June 2020, after which there is an opportunity for more communities to request SIDs at locations where they perceive speeding issues. It is proposed that the programme is promoted to Community Councils through a presentation at a future Joint Community Council meeting. Communities will be able to request inclusion in the programme through an application form to be placed on the council website, **APPENDIX 2**.
- 7.4 As part of the programme, where there has been no previous information collected, speeds will be recorded and reported back to the relevant community council. Where the installation of a SID has been requested in an area where there is no current community council, the results of the surveys will be reported to the party who raised the speeding concern and the Local Ward members. If recorded speeds are found to be excessive, then further assessment will be undertaken against the criteria in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/03 to determine whether a permanent VAS would be required.

- 7.5 There is limited capital budget available for the purchase of additional SIDs signs and this would only be considered where there was demand over and above the existing provision and seen to be effective. Alternatively community funds could be used to purchase additional SIDs. However it is recommended that the SIDs funded by communities would be used as part of the deployment programme and not be available for permanent erection at a single location.

8. **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

There are no financial implications associated with this report as the deployment of SIDs is part of existing staff activities. The programme may identify areas where permanent VAS would be recommended to address excessive speeding and road safety issues. The costs of erecting such signage depends on site specific requirement e.g. location of power supply.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no specific risks associated with this report. There are however risks associated with the ownership and operation of Speed Indicator Devices by communities.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications associated with the current SIDs deployment programme as it forms part of existing duties.

(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), Head of Environmental & Commercial Services, Legal Services Manager, Committee Services Officer (L Rowan) and Police Scotland, Norman Stevenson (Local Area Commander Moray).

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 There are two types of illuminated road signs Vehicle Activated Signs and Speed Indication Devices. VAS are installed on a permanent basis at sites which meet the criteria set out in APPENDIX 1. SIDs are temporary signs which are used to remind drivers of their speed and encourage drivers to lower their speed if over the limit.**
- 9.2 A number of requests have been received from communities for SIDs to be installed on a permanent basis at locations where there is a perceived issue with speeding. This is against best practice and would undermine the effectiveness of the signage.**
- 9.3 The council has four SIDs and has recently commenced a programme for their deployment in response to community requests and in conjunction with Police Scotland, which follows best practice. The programme will be promoted to communities through the Joint Community Council.**
- 9.4 It is recommended that communities are directed to this programme when requesting permanent installation of SIDs.**

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Background Papers:

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