



Community Safety and Leisure Services Scrutiny Final Report On Its Investigation Into Speed Cameras

Councillor Charles Rooney, Executive Member for Transport
Ian Parker, Director of Environment

24 June 2008

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Executive approval of the Service Response and Action Plan based on the recommendations of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's review of Speed Cameras.

BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

2. This report has been developed in response to the Scrutiny Panel's review on speed cameras that concluded in April 2008.
3. The terms of reference are as follows:
 - What evidence was there that speed cameras reduced the number of accidents?
 - What were the issues regarding claims that speed cameras were primarily for income generation?

SERVICE RESPONSE/OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

4. The Action Plan at Appendix 1 outlines Transport and Design Services response to these recommendations.

5. Additional comments on the recommendations are as follows:

- a) *“That the Panel would not support the installation of Fixed Speed cameras in Middlesbrough and where need exists to moderate speed, mobile units with appropriate advanced signage be deployed.”*

The Cleveland Strategic Safety Camera Partnership only uses Mobile Speed Cameras within the Middlesbrough area and this is the predominant detection device in use across the Partnership area. There are no proposals to install any fixed location camera devices for speed enforcement purposes in Middlesbrough.

- b) *“That behaviour modification as opposed to penalty points is considered will bring longer-term benefits. Consequently, that the opportunity for first time offenders to attend an educational course as an alternative to receiving penalty points as a means of longer-term improvement be further promoted.”*

The police currently offer this option to first time offenders as an alternative to receiving penalty points providing the speed was not considered dangerous for the circumstances. Drivers who have lost their licences due to speeding offences will be required undergo further training. All training courses are undertaken at the driver's expense.

- c) *“The term ‘Safety Camera’ does not convey the same deterrent factor as “Speed Camera” and consequently to achieve the desired impact to slow drivers the term “Speed” should be used on all occasions.”*

The term ‘safety camera’ as referred to in the Cleveland Strategic Safety Camera Partnership is a generic description that refers to a number of different types of camera. At the present time this is primarily ‘Speed Cameras’ and ‘Red Light Cameras’ but may in future incorporate cameras enforcing other rules to improve road safety including, waiting restrictions (yellow lines), box junctions, bus lanes and banned turns. It is quite appropriate to call a camera enforcing speed limits a ‘Speed Camera’.

- d) *“That the Council undertake a survey of the traffic calming measures at the entrance of the schools in Middlesbrough. Measures such as chicanes, road humps, signage and use of cameras etc be recorded and the results of which are to be presented to the Panel within six months.”*

The Council has always installed Traffic Calming Measures as a result of evidential assessments at particular sites with the specific aim of reducing casualties. This targeting policy has been very effective in producing year on year reductions in the number of casualties in the town.

Historically, the number of casualties in the vicinity of our 57 school sites is very low. On this evidence very few of our school approach roads would actually benefit from costly physical interventions such as road humps, chicanes etc. unless it is part of a wider area treatment undertaken to reduce a casualty problem.

We have, however, over the period of the last Local Transport Plan, undertaken a range of low cost 'School Zone' improvements for all our schools that involves the appropriate placement of School zigzags, school signs, barrier rails, safe crossing points etc that have helped to maintain the excellent casualty statistics around our schools by raising the profile of these areas.

However the issue that does cause widespread concern outside our schools (and yet does not in itself seem to be a cause accidents) is that of indiscriminate parking by parents delivering and collecting children. This is an environmental problem both in terms of the nuisance to nearby residents and in terms of the peak hour congestion that is caused by parents on the 'school run'.

There are only a few schools with physical traffic calming or 20 mph speed limits in their vicinity and it may therefore be more appropriate for the panel to undertake site visits to these locations rather than receive a report.

- e) *"Future road design to slow traffic should aim to use chicanes in preference to road humps as this is considered a more effective way to slow traffic, requires less maintenance and reduces the impact on buses and emergency vehicles."*

Traffic calming schemes are currently devised using all the techniques at the Council's disposal and one of the essential attributes which can make a scheme more effective is to vary the features in any particular scheme. A full range of traffic calming measures need to be available to be applied depending on the circumstances, including road humps, chicanes, speed cushions, mini-roundabouts etc.

All schemes are subject to consultation with residents, bus operators and the emergency services before they are implemented. As a result there is no history of objections from the emergency services to our schemes because they recognise the benefits they can bring. Bus friendly measures are used as appropriate if a bus route is involved. Further evidence on community preference was received at a recent residents meeting when the Council was asked to consider replacing chicanes with speed humps.

With regard to maintenance issues chicanes often require repairs if struck or over-ran by vehicles, so both forms of treatment do present ongoing maintenance issues.

The existing arrangements for mixing measures have proved very effective for the schemes implemented within the town and we are currently on target to achieve or exceed our 10 year targets with the DfT for 40% reduction in KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) 50% reduction in child KSI 10% reduction in slight casualties. Demand for traffic calming from the public far exceeds our ability to fund these arrangements. It is therefore recommended that the use of speed humps remain an option when designing traffic calming schemes.

- f) *“That the Councils Traffic dept aim, where appropriate, to introduce road signage, which is mounted on, crash collapsible pillars to reduce injury or fatality in the event of an accident.”*

The comments regarding collapsible signs made by Durham County Council as part of the presentations to the panel, were particularly in reference to rural roads with high speeds and are not easily transferred into the urban situation. Indeed a collapsible sign in an urban location could be viewed as a more dangerous feature.

The attributes of any features installed into the highway need to be subjected to an appropriate assessment of the risks and costs. Safety barriers already protect most signs on our higher speed roads such as the A66. Elsewhere in the town the lower speeds mean there is a reduced risk from impact with any street furniture. There are no recorded injury accidents associated with collisions with signs for the last 5 years in Middlesbrough.

There are some locations in Middlesbrough where these signs may add value so the policy on signs will be reviewed over next 12 months.

- g) *“That an article be presented in Middlesbrough News clarifying the issue of income from Speed cameras and also the reduction in road accident injuries over the last seven years in Middlesbrough.”*

The Cleveland Strategic Safety Camera Partnership will be asked to provide an appropriate article in co-operation with Middlesbrough officers.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

6. **Financial** – Any financial implication identified within the action plan will be met from within existing budgets and the Local Transport Plan.
7. **Ward Implications** – There are no ward implications arising from the action plan.
8. **Legal Implications** – There are no legal implications arising from the action plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Members are recommended to accept the action plan at Appendix 1.

REASONS

10. The Executive are required to take a decision on the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations in light of the Service Response and consideration of this matter by the Corporate Management Team.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

11. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Final Report – Review of Speed Cameras Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel – February 2008.

AUTHOR: Brian Glover, Head of Transport and Design Services.

TEL NO: 728100

Address:

Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>