SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

Report of the Director of Environment and Infrastructure

Author:- Sue Jackson, Group Manager Strategy (01992 588 615)

Executive Member: Phil Bibby (Highways and Environment)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the updated Speed Management Strategy to Cabinet for approval, alongside the process for public consultation.

2. Summary

2.1 The Speed Management Strategy was last reviewed in 2014 and since then there have been a number of changes which have necessitated the need for an update, including:

- The adoption of Local Transport Plan 4
- Adoption of the Place and Movement approach
- The introduction of the OPCC Road Safety Fund
- Revised Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2016)

2.2 The key underlying principle (which has been agreed by the Members Advisory Group) is that the strategy provides a framework to ensure that the speed limit for any road is in keeping with its environment rather than putting up speed limit signs and expecting a significant behaviour change. In some cases this may mean lowering speed limits (which in some locations may require changes in the design of a road and/or implementation other measures to change behaviour), in other cases this may mean raising limits or keeping them as they are.

2.3 The strategy demonstrates how these principles can be applied, giving guidance on the implementation of speed limits by providing:

- A consistent approach to setting speed limits based on the function and nature of the route.
- A consistent approach to the implementation of speed management measures including the use of technology
- Consistent criteria for the selection of safety camera sites.
• Clarification of the role of the Police and the County Council as Highways Authority in relation to setting speed limits and undertaking enforcement

• Information on how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Road Safety Fund can be used to address community concerns relating to driver behaviour and local environmental factors.

• Information on education and publicity programmes.

2.4 The introduction of 20mph speed limits provides a mechanism for encouraging the greater uptake of active travel within areas in line with LTP4 Policy 1 (the transport user hierarchy). The strategy sets criteria for the implementation of 20mph areas.

2.5 As this is a supporting document to LTP4, once the strategy has been endorsed by Cabinet, it will be subject to a 12-week consultation process.

2.6 Key issues which should be taken into consideration:

• The overarching principles of the strategy

• The key changes since the 2014 strategy

• The framework for setting speed limits (in particular 20mph limits in 20mph areas)

• The potential for the use of average speed cameras

• The differentiation between average speed cameras being introduced as part of the County Council’s framework and those being introduced by the PCC in response to community concerns and the need for some suggested criteria to manage this process.

2.7 A copy of the strategy is included at Appendix 1.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Special Cabinet Panel considered a report on this item of business at its meeting on 3 June 2020. The Panel recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet approves:

(i) the updated Speed Management Strategy, in particular its framework for setting speed limits (including 20mph areas).

(ii) a 12-week consultation on the strategy over summer 2020 before bringing the Speed Management Strategy back through the political process in Autumn 2020.
4. **Background**

4.1 The control of vehicle speeds is the single most relevant factor used worldwide to tackle Killed and Serious Injury accidents. The responsibility for setting speed limits on roads lies with the Highway Authority (Highways England for Motorways and Trunk Roads and the County Council for the remaining road network within the county). The role of enforcement falls to the Enforcement Authority (the Police). This is supported by the Hertfordshire Safety Camera Partnership that uses speed related injury collision data to prioritise the deployment of fixed and mobile enforcement sites as part of an evidence-based approach.

4.2 The Speed Management Strategy is a supporting document to Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). Policy 15 of LTP4 states that the County Council through its Speed Management Strategy will seek to manage the network to achieve appropriate speeds in the interests of safety, other road users and the environment and will maintain it to help set speed limits on the County’s roads.

4.3 The Speed Management Strategy clearly links to a number of LTP4’s broader objectives such as:

- Making journeys and their impact safer and healthier
- Enhancing the quality and vitality of town centres –
- Preserving the character and quality of the Hertfordshire environment
- Reducing carbon emissions

4.4 The Strategy also contributes or influences a number of LTP policies:

Policy 1 – Transport User Hierarchy  
Policy 5 – Development Management  
Policy 7 – Active Travel – Walking  
Policy 8 – Active Travel – Cycling  
Policy 12 – Network Management  
Policy 13 – New Roads and Junctions  
Policy 17 – Road Safety

4.5 It therefore links directly with a number of the other LTP4 supporting strategies including:

- Active Travel Strategy  
- Roads in Hertfordshire – A Design Guide (under review)  
- Road Safety Strategy  
- Network Management Strategy

4.6 The purpose of the Speed Management Strategy is to set out a consistent approach to the setting speed limits based on the function and nature of the route as set out in the Department for Transport Guidance Document Circular 01/2013 – Setting Local Speed limits.
4.7 The Strategy provides the following:

- A consistent approach to setting speed limits based on the function and nature of the route
- A consistent approach to the implementation of speed management measures including the use of technology
- Consistent criteria for the selection of safety camera sites
- Clarification of the role of the Police and the County Council as Highways Authority in relation to setting speed limits and undertaking enforcement
- Information on how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Road Safety Fund can be used to address community concerns relating to driver behaviour and local environmental factors
- Information on education and publicity programmes

4.8 The key principles of the Strategy (which have been agreed by the Members Advisory Group [MAG]) are as follows:

‘To ensure the speed limit for any road is in keeping with its environment’

This will mean:

1. In some cases (where appropriate) the County Council will lower speed limits
2. In some cases (where appropriate) the County Council will raise speed limits
3. In some cases (where appropriate) the County Council will need to change the design of a road and / or implement other appropriate measures to change behaviour
4. The County Council will not put up speed limit signs and expect a significant behaviour change
5. The County Council will consider speed limit changes that support active travel (walking and cycling) where appropriate and in line with the strategy

4.9 These principles will be applied to all roads in Hertfordshire that are the responsibility of the Highway Authority and will ensure consistency in the implementation of speed limits across the county.

4.10 Speed enforcement is the responsibility of Hertfordshire Constabulary. The police have competing demands for officers' time and in recent times the presence of Roads Policing has diminished. As a result, their enforcement activity tends to be focussed on sites with a history of speed related collisions and casualty reduction, along with the use of both fixed and mobile speed camera detection provided by the safety camera partnership.

4.11 It is possible to request enforcement activity via the Local Priority Setting Forums who need to approve this. These are made up of the Police Safer
Neighbourhood team. Any requests also need to be authorised by the Police Inspector for that area. Enforcement activity however tends to be focussed on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). There is both limited time and capacity for local police to perform speed enforcement when set against their other completing demands.

5. Key Changes to the Strategy

5.1 The current Speed Management Strategy was adopted in 2014. Since then there have been a number of changes both locally and nationally that have been considered in the development of this draft strategy, including:

- The adoption of Local Transport Plan 4 with the key policy 1 that sets out a Transport User Hierarchy which prioritises the needs of vulnerable road users over other motor vehicle user needs.

- Adoption of the Place and Movement approach which sets out the function of each road and therefore provides a framework for setting appropriate speed limits and/or identifying potential changes to the environment to support them.

- The introduction of the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Road Safety Fund which is an additional source of potential funding for behavioural change activities and the development of engineering measures. This provides a means for addressing community concerns in relation to issues identified that are beyond those considered as road safety priorities (which are based on casualty statistics).

- Revised Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions in 2016 which allow Highway Authorities further discretion relating to certain traffic signage placement.

5.2 As a result of this the key changes between the new version of the strategy and the 2014 version are as follows:

- The setting out of 5 core principles (as outlined in 4.8). In order to achieve this, greater clarity has been provided in relation to:
  
  (i) The clarification of the relationship between mean speed and 85th percentile speed.
  
  (ii) The design and potential measures required to change driver behaviour.
  
  (iii) 20mph limits discussed in the context of 20mph areas
  
  (iv) The use of the Place and Movement approach to help guide appropriate speed limit choice including areas that may be suitable for 20mph.
  
  (v) The role of the Speed Management Group.
Further details on the changes are given in Appendix B of the Strategy.

6. **Principles for setting Speed Limits**

6.1 The overriding principle for applying speed limits is that they should encourage self-compliance by motorists where possible as set out in DfT Circular 01/2013 – Setting Local Speed Limits. To achieve this, speed limits need to reflect the physical environment of that highway section, the speed motorists are currently travelling at, the level of use by both motor vehicles and vulnerable users and whether there is a speed related collision history. By following this principle, the County Council can use its powers as Highways Authority to help enforce speed limits by design and the application of appropriate technology as it emerges in partnership with the police.

6.2 A framework has been developed which provides a guide to assist in speed limit selection. The first stage is to assess the environment to confirm that a speed limit is appropriate for the road. This includes the following checks:

- Measurements of the existing speed motorists are travelling at – for 30mph to 70mph limits the mean speed should not exceed the proposed limit (20mph areas are discussed separately in Section 7 below)
- The Place and Movement category of the road – i.e. is it primarily focussed on vehicle movement or does it have more of a place function (i.e. locations where people want to visit)
- The environment; e.g. whether there is an active frontage, the road width, curvature of the road and presence of junctions which encourage drivers to travel at lower speeds
- The presence of vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists (either currently or in the future as a way of increasing attractiveness of the route for active modes of travel)

6.3 If the current measured speed is higher than the proposed limit then there are three potential outcomes based on the core principles of the strategy:

- Keep the speed limit as it is
- Lower the speed limit as proposed (in conjunction with supporting measures)
- Review the rationale for the existing limit – in a small number of cases, the environment may mean that a higher speed limit may be more appropriate for the section or part of, to help encourage the correct behaviour in the relevant environment

6.4 Even where the environment supports the proposed limit then designers may need to implement additional measures to change the vehicle speed,
as research has confirmed that speed limit signs alone don’t ensure compliance with speed limits, these measures could include the following:

- Vertical measures (humps)
- Horizontal measures (priority systems – if flows are balanced AND heavy)
- Road or point closures (if speed is due to vehicles avoiding main roads)
- Road width (introduction of formalised parking)
- Curvature
- New junctions
- Traffic signals (volume and flow dependent)
- Gateway and entry features

6.5 As well as physical measures there is also the potential to use technology. For example, average speed cameras are now being used elsewhere in the police tri force area (Herts Beds and Cambridgeshire Road Policing unit) and have potential to encourage compliance with posted speed limits on longer sections of road where other engineering measures may not be desirable or feasible for a number of reasons.

6.6 It should be noted however that funding for the implementation of such measures is limited and will be subject to internal and external bidding procedures. It cannot therefore be assumed that funding is available for widespread implementation of physical traffic calming measures to support reductions in speed limits.

6.7 A formal process is in place to consider speed limit changes and ensure a consistent approach. Any requests for changes to speed limit need to be submitted to the Speed Management Group for approval prior to consultation and again following legal advertisement. The Speed Management Group has been set up to ensure that the key criteria within the Strategy are being followed and consistently applied. The group is formed of officers from Highways (Highway Safety, Highway Design, Strategy, Development Management and Network Management), the Road Safety programme manager and the Police Road Policing Unit.

6.8 It is important to note that the adoption of the updated Speed Management Strategy will not result in wholesale changes to speeds on existing roads. Instead it provides an updated framework for making decisions in relation to requests for speed limit changes and when considering Highways Locality Budget (HLB) and LTP schemes. Over time this would be expected to lead to a gradual evolution in speed limits on Hertfordshire roads.

6.9 The principles of the updated Speed Management Strategy have been discussed and agreed by the Members Advisory Group.
7. **20mph Areas**

*Existing areas*

7.1 The introduction of 20mph speed limits provides a mechanism for encouraging the greater uptake of active travel within areas in line with LTP4 Policy 1 (the transport user hierarchy).

7.2 The Speed Management Strategy sets the criteria for the implementation of 20mph areas. In existing locations 20mph areas would normally only be considered on streets that are primarily residential in nature and where pedestrian and cycle movements are high and where motor vehicle movement is not the primary function.

7.3 Nationally there are two definitions for roads with 20 mph speed limits. These are 20mph limits (indicated by road signing only every 200m) and 20mph zones (self-enforcing areas with engineering measures every 100m and some limited road signage).

7.4 Following discussions with MAG, it has been agreed that this can be confusing and as such a consistent approach to road signage is needed so that the public understand what the speed limit is. To avoid confusion between the two national definitions (zones and limits) the proposal is to use the collective term 20mph ‘Areas’. Whilst these will be designed in accordance with national guidelines in Hertfordshire, there will be a speed limit sign at least every 200m within these 20mph Areas.

7.5 The recently adopted Place and Movement approach provides a means of determining the function of a street, the level of activity upon it and whether it is likely to have a predominant place function (with higher movements of pedestrians and cyclists) or movement function (with higher numbers of vehicles).

7.6 A three by three matrix has been developed as shown in Figure 1 below. All roads in Hertfordshire have been classified with a Place and Movement category. This provides an evidence based consistent approach to defining which areas may be suitable for the application of 20mph limits and potentially provides a means of allowing more extensive 20mph areas to be identified and then investigated.

7.7 As a starting point, 20mph limits can be considered as potentially being appropriate on roads in the P2/M1 category (which typically represent residential streets). These are generally streets where vehicle movements are low (or should be low) but where pedestrian / cycle movements are likely to be more important given the local land uses (i.e. homes and associated facilities). 20mph limits are also likely to be appropriate in areas with a high place function (P3 category e.g. Town Centres).

7.8 Roads with higher movement functions frequently run between more residential areas with a higher place function. In some instances, it may be appropriate to consider 20mph limits on roads in the P2/ M2 category which represent multi-functional roads (for example distributor roads within
housing estates) but it is likely that these will require additional supporting Engineering / Design or technological measures to aid enforcement as the limits will need to be self-enforcing and not reliant on the police for enforcement.

### Figure 1 – Hertfordshire Place and Movement Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Vehicular Movement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>P1 / M1</td>
<td>e.g. Rural Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>P2 / M1</td>
<td>e.g. Predominantly Residential street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>P3 / M1</td>
<td>e.g. Town Centre square/street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>P1 / M2</td>
<td>e.g. Inter-urban road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>P2 / M2</td>
<td>e.g. Multi Function Distributor Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>P3 / M3</td>
<td>e.g. Transport Interchange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.9 Where there is a request for a 20mph limit, speed limit measurements should be undertaken. A 20mph zone would normally only be considered to be potentially self-enforcing with signs where maximum mean speeds are 25mph or less prior to implementation. The revised strategy removes the previous 90/10 rule (where at least 90% of the roads in a proposed zone need to have mean speeds below 25mph).

7.10 Where existing speeds are over 25mph (but less than 30mph) the implementation of a 20mph limit is likely to require the introduction of supporting physical and / or technological measures, appropriate to the speed reduction required. Where 85th percentile speeds exceed 36mph the existing environment is unlikely to be suitable for a 20mph area.

7.11 As well as the Place and Movement category, consideration should also be given to whether the environment is suitable for a lower speed limit. Converting wide unobstructed roads, in particular, is likely to require speed humps or other significant physical alterations. Issues to consider include:
• Presence of community facilities and schools (picked up in the Place and Movement assessment)
• Closeness of buildings (is there an active frontage?)
• Visibility (is it obscured?)
• Width of the carriageway
• Presence of parking
• Density of housing
• Footfall (numbers of pedestrians. Or potential for pedestrians / cyclists)

7.12 It should be noted that in any 20mph area where consultation has already started (or has recently been completed) prior to the adoption of this revised strategy will be based on the 2014 Speed Management Strategy criteria.

**Schools**

7.13 Advisory 20mph areas can be introduced outside schools where the environment is appropriate and where maximum mean speeds are measured as 30mph or less prior to implementation. Although being advisory these are not legally enforceable, they are potentially an additional tool to encourage behaviour change in these areas without accompanying physical traffic calming measures.

7.14 The default position in Hertfordshire is that 20mph will be a first consideration (where the environment is suitable) when new schools are proposed and significant changes are made to existing school facilities. These would be mandatory limits.

**New developments**

7.15 The physical design of new residential developments should naturally encourage motorists to drive at 20mph or less with reinforcement by signage in predominantly residential areas and outside schools and other community facilities. The next generation of roads in Hertfordshire will provide appropriate guidance on the layouts of roads and road widths to help achieve this. This will follow accepted best practice principals from design guidance documents such as Manual for Streets.

**Signage**

7.16 As outlined in 7.3 and 7.4 above, the strategy also sets out Hertfordshire’s policy on traffic signage for 20mph areas so that they are signed consistently across the county.

7.17 In 20mph areas, the revised strategy states that it is important that the public understand the limit which necessitates the need for repeater signs within the area to reinforce the limit. National Guidance on 20mph limits requires frequent signing (or physical features). Using 20mph areas gives the County Council more discretion with signing. It is proposed that where there is a 20mph area there would be repeater signs or roundels or
markings at no less than every 200 m unless local deviations are agreed with the Speed Management Group.

8. **Average Speed Cameras and the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

8.1 The potential introduction of average speed cameras as a tool to manage speeds on the highway will be considered through our criteria for Safety Camera Site Selection and Implementation (Speed Management Strategy Appendix G) where there are particular accident and speed related issues, where other solutions are not appropriate and if funding is available.

8.2 As a separate process, the OPCC can also implement Average Speed Cameras using their Road Safety fund to address local community concerns. Cameras installed at these locations are owned and operated by the OPCC who provide a commuted sum to the County Council for ongoing maintenance (although the County Council would have responsibility to make the cameras safe if they were damaged).

8.3 Whilst criteria for concern sites still need to be agreed, these could include the following:

(i) That a genuine speeding issue has been identified (ie 85th percentile speeds are above the limit and above the APCO tolerance thresholds)

(ii) That there is the support of the parish / town council and community

(iii) There is agreement from the police

(iv) That there is County Council Member support

8.4 This should avoid the situation experienced elsewhere in the country where large numbers of cameras have been deployed in a variety of disparate locations putting additional maintenance liabilities on local councils and additional pressure on police back office staff to operate them.

9. **Next Steps**

9.1 Further to agreement from Cabinet on the principles set and the working draft of the strategy, formal support will be sought from Hertfordshire police to the document prior to consultation.

9.2 As a supporting document of LTP4 the draft Speed Management Strategy will have a 12-week public consultation. Feedback will be considered by officers in conjunction with the Executive members for Highways and Environment and with the Member Advisory Group to consider any further changes prior to returning to the Cabinet Panel for Endorsement in advance of Cabinet approval and adoption later this year.

9.3 The revised strategy and its core principles provide a mechanism for rationalising current speed limits to make them more understandable to the user which in turn improves the level of compliance and reduces reliance on police enforcement. It is also an important step to future proof our
network for future technological developments such as autonomous vehicles. This however is a significant piece of work and it is recommended that a discrete area is identified for a trial for applying the framework to check whether existing roads have the correct limits. Required changes could then be identified and taken back to members to gain support for changing the limits (and the associated Traffic Regulation Orders) and the agreement of a budget to implement the changes.

9.4 Following adoption of the Speed Management Strategy further work will be required to test whether the Place and Movement categories can be used to guide the review and setting of higher-level speed limits (30mph+) as part of the speed limit framework.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 By providing a clear framework and rationale for introducing speed limits based primarily on the existing environment of the road the approach potentially will lead to a smarter way of spending the budget when implementing 20mph areas.

10.2 Having an ability to investigate more extensive 20mph areas will potentially lead to savings in Traffic Regulation Orders costs as more comprehensive areas are progressed rather than following more piecemeal approach. There will however be additional cost to implement consistent signage or road markings in 20 mph areas with the requirement for signage at least every 200m. The unit cost of a sign is typically £100-£150. It is anticipated that most requests for 20mph areas will come via members and therefore the primary funding mechanism will be through the Highways Locality Budget (HLB).

10.3 Where supporting engineering or technological solutions are required, funding could potentially be met from the following sources:

- Local Transport Plan capital funding (Integrated Transport Block Allocation)
- Developer Section 106 funding
- External funding (eg Borough, District and Parish Councils, grants)
- Member Highway and Locality budgets
- Police and Crime Commissioner Road Safety fund

10.4 Notwithstanding this, funding is likely to be limited for the implementation of widespread engineering design measures to reduce speeds. If the funding is not available, then the schemes will not go ahead.

10.5 Some offsetting of costs should however be possible from developers implementing signage and Traffic Regulation Orders as part of their proposals vs the current practice of retrofitting the HLB.
11. **Equalities Implications**

11.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

11.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council’s statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

11.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and a draft is annexed at Appendix 2.

11.5 The following potential impacts on those with protected characteristics under the Act have been identified:

- Generally, there are expected to be positive impacts for protected groups, particularly from the potential implementation of 20mph limits to encourage active travel and improve safety for vulnerable users and the education programmes targeted to groups with higher risk of speed related collisions (e.g. young drivers).

- Consultation on proposed speed limit changes needs to ensure that protected groups within the local population are aware of and able to comment on the proposals.

11.6 Actions to address / mitigate these potential impacts are:

- Consider consultation strategy for main SMS to include groups such as older people, disabled people and the needs of non-English speakers and include a questionnaire to establish if all groups are responding proportionally.

- When speed limit changes are being designed, consultation arrangements should identify the key groups in the area, make efforts to engage them and include a questionnaire to establish if they are responding proportionally.
12. **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

12.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) EU Directive requires that all new Local Transport Plans and their associated strategies are assessed for their effect on the environment. As required under this directive a Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken on The Local Transport Plan (LTP4) before its publication in May 2108. The Strategic Environmental Assessment of LTP4 initially assessed a Road Safety/Speed Restrictions policy, a separate Speed Management policy was developed as a result of consultation. The LTP4 Speed Management Policy sets out the roles of setting speed limits and enforcement, and that, through a Speed Management Strategy, and joint working with the Police, appropriate speeds will be set in the interest of safety, road users and the environment.

12.2 This revised Speed Management Strategy has been screened to determine if a SEA Assessment is required (for example does the document contain information that has not already been covered by assessing LTP4 corresponding policy or intervention packages). It has been decided that the Speed Management Strategy will not require a full SEA Assessment as it is only setting out in more detail how the County Council work in partnership with the police setting speed limits and enforcement measures and to provide a consistent approach across the county. These issues have already been assessed as part of the LTP4 SEA. The Speed Management Strategy does not suggest any changes to policy, or new policy, or any new significant service delivery for speed management, and therefore will be covered by the overarching Strategic Environmental Assessment for LTP4.

*Background Information*

Local Transport Plan 4 - [https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf)