

**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Speed Management Plan**

**REPORT OF:**               **Peter Udall, Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to consult on a revised Speed Management Plan (SMP) for Gateshead and as a replacement of the now outdated version previously approved in 2007. Following consultation, a revised plan will be brought back to Cabinet and then full Council for formal approval.

### **Background**

2. The effective management of traffic speed is an important element in improving road safety and in managing the impact of traffic on local communities. By encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport it also has a role in tackling wider problems such as climate change and air quality. The Council's previous Speed Management Plan was approved in 2007.
3. The SMP was informed by the Department for Transport (DfT) circular 1/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. In January 2013 the DfT revised its guidance and DfT circular 01/13 'Setting Local Speed Limits' was published. Whilst the principles contained within DfT circular 01/13 have informed the Council's speed management considerations since 2013 the SMP has not been formally reviewed and updated during this time.
4. Circular 01/13 retains and builds upon many of the underlying principles of DfT Circular 01/06 whilst providing additional evidence of the safety and wider benefits of setting appropriate speed limits.
5. It is also important to update the plan for the following reasons:
  - To reflect changes in other local and national policy and guidance
  - To reflect the speed management works that have taken place or are planned
  - To review and reflect on more up to date trends and statistics
  - To reflect changes in technology
6. Since the initial establishment of the SMP a Police and Crime Commissioner has assumed responsibilities that were previously within the remit of a Police

Authority. However, the Police continue to be responsible for speed enforcement on the highway.

7. Gateshead Council, as Highways Authority, is responsible for the setting of speed limits and the management of speed on all public roads in Gateshead (except the A1 and A194(M), which are maintained by Highways England). The Police are responsible for the enforcement of speed limits.

### **Proposal**

8. The updated SMP sets out how the Council will develop and implement its approach to speed management, helping to minimise the number and severity of accidents. It demonstrates the importance of speed management in terms of road safety and in assisting the Council in achieving its aims in relation to the Thrive Agenda. It also identifies the importance of speed management in relation to wider benefits both locally and nationally.
9. A set of core aims relating to the reduction in number and severity of road accidents linked to speed are set out through the measures included in the plan.
10. Recent trends in relation to speed related road safety within Gateshead, the North East region and nationally are set out to demonstrate the importance of road safety and also highlight where improvements have occurred and where further work is needed. Gateshead Council continues to provide traffic accident data for the Tyne and Wear Authorities through the Traffic and Accident Data Unit (TADU). This data is used to inform and analyse trends and assist in identifying and prioritising where work is needed.
11. The Plan also sets out what types of speed management measures are appropriate and when they are used. This includes engineering measures, partnership working and education including work with schools.
12. Funding of road safety works is largely carried out as part of the Council's LTP Capital Integrated Transport Programme. The Plan includes a method of identifying, assessing and prioritising works.
13. A key area of speed management work over the past ten years is the introduction of 20mph zones in areas where high numbers of pedestrians can be expected, namely schools, shopping areas and residential areas. The plan includes a programme of future 20mph zone schemes, which was approved by Cabinet in February 2020.

### **Recommendations**

14. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the revised draft Speed Management Plan and the measures contained within this for consultation.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To assist the Council in achieving its Thrive Agenda.
- (ii) To improve road safety in the borough

### **Policy Context**

1. The plan is in line with the vision for transport as outlined in the Gateshead Sustainable Community Strategy and support the pledges within Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives. It also supports the aims and objectives of the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 3 (a new Transport Plan for the North East is currently under development).

### **Background**

2. Gateshead's transport network provides an essential service to the community, underpinning social and economic activity of all kinds. Investment in the network is important both in ensuring that the travel needs of local business and communities can continue to be met, and also that the adverse impacts of travel can be managed and, wherever possible, mitigated. The effective management of traffic speed is an important element within this, supporting improved road safety, and helping to manage the impact of traffic on local communities.
3. Road Safety is an important issue and the Council and Northumbria Police each receive many requests and expressions of concern in relation to speed management each year. Speeding traffic also affects people in many other ways beyond immediate safety concerns. In particular it can discourage active and independent travel and create community severance.
4. Over the last ten years, there has been a gradual downward trend in highway casualties in Gateshead, reducing from 872 in 2008 to 511 in 2018, a fall of 41%. Whilst it is difficult to relate this directly to any single or combination of factors it is considered important to continue this trend by continuing to carry out works which are aimed at tackling speed related accidents.
5. The updated Speed Management Plan sets out how the Council will develop and implement its approach to speed management, helping to minimise the number and severity of speed related accidents and reducing other problems associated with excess traffic speed.

### **Why review the Speed Management Plan?**

6. The Council's previous Speed Management Plan (SMP) was in 2007. It was informed by the Department for Transport (DfT) circular 1/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. In January 2013 the DfT revised its guidance and DfT circular 01/13 'Setting Local Speed Limits' was published. Whilst the principles contained within DfT circular 01/13 have informed the Council's speed management considerations since 2013, the SMP has not been formally reviewed and updated during this time.

7. Circular 01/13 retains and builds upon many of the underlying principles of DfT Circular 01/06 whilst providing additional evidence of the safety and wider benefits of setting appropriate speed limits.
8. It is also important to update the plan for the following reasons:
  - To reflect changes in other local and national policy and guidance
  - To reflect the speed management works that have taken place or are planned
  - To review and reflect on more up to date trends and statistics
  - To reflect changes in technology.

### **Vision and policy**

9. The Speed Management vision is: Safe and efficient speeds for all.
10. The Plan also sets out the Council's Speed Management Policy as:
  11. Speed limits shall be introduced in a manner consistent with current government guidance and exceptions to usual practice will be recorded and justified as a departure from standard.
  12. The introduction of speed management measures whether based on speed limits, engineering, education or enforcement will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that they meet and contribute to the:
    - Speed Management Plan vision and core aims;
    - Local Transport Plan Goals – specifically those relating to road and community safety and climate change;
    - Gateshead Council's Thrive Agenda;and;
    - Take into account relevant regulations, best practice, all highway users and local experience;
    - Are consistent with Gateshead Council's Network Management Plan.
  13. The core aims of the SMP are to:
    - Reduce the incidence of inappropriate speed on Gateshead's roads;
    - Achieve significant reductions in the number of personal injury accidents occurring on the highway as a result of excessive or inappropriate speed;
    - Reduce the severity of road accidents that do occur;
    - Increase levels of speed limit compliance;
    - Reduce community severance;

- Contribute towards creating more attractive environments in which to live and work;
- Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport; and
- Adapt to changes in technology.

### **Safe Systems Approach**

14. The Speed Management Plan will be based around the Safe Systems Approach (SSA) to road safety, which is centred on the principle that life and health should not be compromised by our need to travel.
15. The Plan states that Gateshead Council as Highways Authority will contribute to a SSA through a variety of measures and will work with other stakeholders in improving the SSA.

### **Funding**

16. Speed management schemes will largely be funded by Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport funding, mainly coming under the Safe and Sustainable Communities key area.
17. This can sometimes be supplemented by specific bids to central government and its departments and through developer contributions linked to planning approvals. However, such opportunities are rarely linked specifically to speed management or road safety.

### **Identification and prioritisation of works**

18. The method for prioritising schemes is set out in full detail in Table 1.2 of the Plan.
19. Works will be incorporated into the Council's transport capital programme using the annual traffic management budget (for schemes less than £10k), as a standalone scheme (for schemes above £10k), or as part of a wider scheme.
20. Urgent works which cannot be accommodated within the budget will be carried out as an agreed overspend or through postponing less urgent works.
21. If more than one location falls within the same category, the overall number of accidents, accident rate and accident severity will be considered.
22. For rural roads, as recommended in DfT Circular 01/13, the Council will also draw upon the methods set out in the Transport Research Laboratory guidance 'Accident Analysis on Rural Roads: A Technical Guide' (2004).

## **Speed limits**

23. The Plan sets out the general principles for setting speed limits.
24. Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and be regarded as the maximum rather than the target speed.
25. The Council will assess speed limits and the need for intervention based on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile (the speed below which 85% of motorists are travelling) and average speeds.
26. The Council will utilise permanent speed monitoring sites where available and in other locations will commission independent specialist contractors to carry out speed surveys.
27. Table 2.2. of the Plan sets out the different scenarios which might lead to an intervention. This includes where the average and 85th percentile speeds are not closely linked, and where one fatal or a series of non fatal accidents related to speed occur.
28. The Plan proposes that speed limits will not be routinely reviewed other than in the case of 20mph limits for which there is an ongoing programme of works, or in the following circumstances:
  - As part of a wider highway scheme;
  - Following a fatal accident (coroner recommendation or engineer assessment);
  - Following a series of serious or slight accidents linked to speed;
  - As a result of MP, Council Member or Emergency Service request
  - Following receipt of a petition (in accordance with Gateshead Council Petition Scheme);
  - At the request of a neighbouring Local Authority;
  - When linked to new development.

## **New developments**

29. New residential developments will typically be required to adhere to the street hierarchy set out in Gateshead Council's Transport Design Guide (once approved), with the road type being linked to function. The hierarchy allows inclusion of factors such as speed limit, road geometry and level of user segregation in managing speed and road safety.

## **Speed Management Measures**

30. The Plan sets out several types of Speed Management measures available to the Council. These are summarised in Appendix 2.

## **Consultation**

31. The Cabinet members for Environment & Transport have been consulted.

32. Due to the relatively significant changes made to the Speed Management Plan since the previous version, the Plan will undergo a consultation process following any Cabinet approval. This will engage with groups such as emergency services, bus operators, and members of the public. A revised plan will then be brought back to Cabinet for referral to full Council for formal approval.

## **Alternative Options**

33. The alternative option is to continue with the previous version of the Plan from 2007. This is not recommended because the previous Plan is now outdated and does not reflect the changes that have occurred since 2007, in particular the DfT circular 01/13 'Setting Local Speed Limits'.

## **Implications of Recommended Options**

34. **Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that speed management schemes will be contained within the capital programme for transport. This is largely funded by Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport funding, supplemented by specific bids to central government and developer contributions.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications.
- c) **Property Implications** – No property implications have been identified.

35. **Risk Management Implications** – The main risk associated with the Speed Management Plan is that the Plan is not regularly reviewed and becomes outdated and not reflective of the current environment. This could risk the good progress made so far in reducing highway casualties in Gateshead. There is another risk around the ability to fund speed management measures.

While this has been mitigated by including placeholders for the measures within the capital programme for the next three years, wider uncertainty

remains over the scale of future Government funding for this kind of work pending the outcome from the Comprehensive Spending Review.

36. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – One of the aims of the Plan is to reduce community severance, which will assist in reducing social exclusion by improving access for the young, elderly, and people with disabilities.
37. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – The Plan aims to reduce speed exceedances and encourage safer driving, contributing towards creating safer and more attractive environments for all transport users and pedestrians, and a long-term reduction in speeding-related traffic offences.
38. **Health Implications** – The Plan aims to reduce the number and severity of road accidents as a result of excessive or inappropriate speeds, leading to a reduction in injury and fatality on the roads. It should also reduce the perceived threat from speeding traffic to pedestrians and cyclists, thereby helping to encourage active and healthy travel.
39. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** – The Plan encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport and aims to create a safer environment for such modes, for example cycling.
40. **Human Rights Implications** – No human rights implications have been identified.
41. **Ward Implications** – All wards will be affected.

#### **Background Information**

42. Further background information is contained in:
- Gateshead Council (GMBC) Speed Management Plan and Appendices
  - DfT circular 01/13 'Setting Local Speed Limits'

## Types of speed management measure

### 1. Speed management measures available to the Council include:

#### Speed limits

2. *Zonal speed limits*: affect more than one road and where only entry and exit signage is required, including 40mph and 20mph zones. Proposed zones in Gateshead are set out in appendices to the Plan.
3. *Other speed limits*: includes variable and advisory 20mph limits, which will not be introduced in Gateshead, as it is the Council's view that such restrictions are not effective and are contrary to the ongoing introduction of 20mph Zones in the borough. This also covers ultra low speed limits (below 20mph), which may be part of new developments but will not be retrofitted to existing streets.

#### Engineering measures (general)

4. *Vehicle Activated signs/Driver feedback signs*: Due to high levels of ongoing maintenance and concerns over the long-term effectiveness of such signs the use of VAS will be limited to exceptional circumstances only and will not be widely used. VAS will only be considered when there is an accident problem associated with inappropriate speed that has not been satisfactorily remedied by standard signing and other engineering measures.
5. *Road markings*: includes speed limit roundels, SLOW markings or transverse bar markings placed within the carriageway and dragons' teeth.
6. *Passive safety*: when designing highway schemes on roads with a speed limit of 40mph or greater the Council will, as part of a safe systems approach, include the use of products, mostly road furniture, which are designed to allow for driver error by reducing the severity of impact when drivers do lose control and leave the carriageway.

#### Engineering measures (urban/village)

7. *Vertical traffic calming*: includes road humps, speed tables, speed cushions or raised junctions. Legislation only permits the installation of vertical traffic calming features on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less. The Council will consider the road function and the level of use by buses and emergency vehicles. On bus routes only flat top humps with a table top of 10m or more or speed cushions will be permitted.
8. *Horizontal traffic calming and road narrowing*: includes build-outs, chicanes, islands/pedestrian refuges, road narrowing/pinch points, mini roundabouts, and road re-alignment. They are usually limited to roads with a speed limit of up to 40mph, although certain measures such as islands, which encourage slower speeds without any sudden horizontal deflection will be considered on roads with higher speed limits. Consideration will be given to the types of vehicles using the route.

9. *Street closures*: certain streets may be strategically closed to reduce the impact of through traffic. This is likely to be more effective as part of an area wide strategy and may also form one element of an area wide 20mph Zone scheme.
10. *On-street parking*: whilst not a speed management engineering measure per se, on street parking can perform a speed management function by narrowing the road. The Council will, therefore, when considering the installation of waiting restrictions to prevent or restrict parking on the carriageway, consider the potential impact upon traffic speeds.
11. *Traffic signals*: a signalised pedestrian crossing with speed detection capabilities is in place at Rowlands Gill. This enables the traffic signals to recognise the speed of oncoming vehicles and where a speed limit exceedance is detected will turn red in order to force the approaching vehicle to stop. Subject to monitoring this approach will be considered in other areas.

#### Engineering measures (rural)

12. *Village gateways*: managing the transition from high speed road to a limit of 20 or 30mph within a village or small settlement. Gateshead Council aims to introduce village gateway treatments on all village entries in rural and semi-rural locations using a standard approach. This will be through a combination of appropriate signage (speed limit, count down), fencing, surface material changes, bollards, road markings (roundels, dragons' teeth, transverse bar markings, hatching), and rumble devices (more than 200m from residential properties).
13. *Bends*: measures to make motorists more aware of the dangers of specific bends where excess speed is known to be a problem. This will be achieved through one or a combination of measures bend warning signage, chevron signs, cats eyes, bollards and transverse or edge of carriageway road markings.
14. *Quiet lanes*: considered where there is strong community support, 85th percentile speeds are below 35mph, traffic flows are below 1000 vehicles per day, or road widths are below 5m. They will typically include signage and discrete traffic calming such as road narrowing, central strips of vegetation, false cattle grids and fencing to encourage lower traffic speeds.

#### Education/enforcement

15. *Safety Camera Strategy/ Northumbria Safer roads Initiative (NSRI)*: Although the Police withdrew from the original partnership in 2016, moves are underway to re-establish this. This will provide a new basis for joint working between local authorities and Northumbria Police, including the Safety Camera Strategy and publicity and educational initiatives.

16. *Speed Monitoring Network/Traffic and Accident Data Unit (TADU)*: Some 120 locations across the borough, including sites of permanent and mobile safety cameras, have traffic monitoring equipment installed in the carriageway. Many of these sites are capable of measuring traffic speeds, meaning that these can be monitored, with a view to determining changes over time. In this way, the impact of the SMP and its associated initiatives can be monitored. Gateshead Council officers in conjunction with TADU will utilise the data gathered from the speed monitoring network in conjunction with accident data to assess the requirement for speed management measures. This will be carried out annually and will involve analysis of accident clusters and assessment of locations where 85th percentile speeds exceed an acceptable level.
17. *Publicity*: it is essential to continue with ongoing local and national campaigns which highlight the problems of inappropriate or excessive speed. Gateshead Council will continue to subscribe to Road Safety Great Britain (RSGB) as well as being a key partner within the regional RSGB North East working group to promote its own and other new and established national road safety campaigns. It is envisaged the renewed Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative (NSRI), will also develop and implement a programme of road safety campaign work. Additional road safety information, education, training and publicity initiatives, will be aimed at specific target audiences, such as MPs, Councillors, the public, Council staff, local employers, and other road safety groups.

#### Emerging technology

18. *Vehicle speed detection/limiters*: In 2019 the EU provisionally announced that all new vehicles sold in the UK would be fitted with speed limiting technology from 2022 onwards. Vehicles with this technology would be fitted with cameras capable of recognising road signs allowing the vehicle to limit its speed. It may be that an override system could be installed or that the vehicle may only warn drivers of an exceedance – this will be decided by the UK government. Gateshead Council will monitor the development of this EU ruling and the UK response to this, as there is likely to be a requirement on the part of Gateshead Council to ensure all speed limit signage is legible and compliant in order for vehicles with speed limit recognition technology to operate correctly on the borough's roads.
19. *Connected and autonomous vehicles*: The ability of autonomous vehicles to detect the correct speed at which to travel both in relation to the maximum signed speed limit and for the road conditions could see human error by autonomous vehicle drivers as a factor in road traffic collisions removed, but only if technology can firstly be proven to be suitably reliable. Gateshead Council will continue to monitor such developments and review the need for changes SMP and highway infrastructure accordingly.

